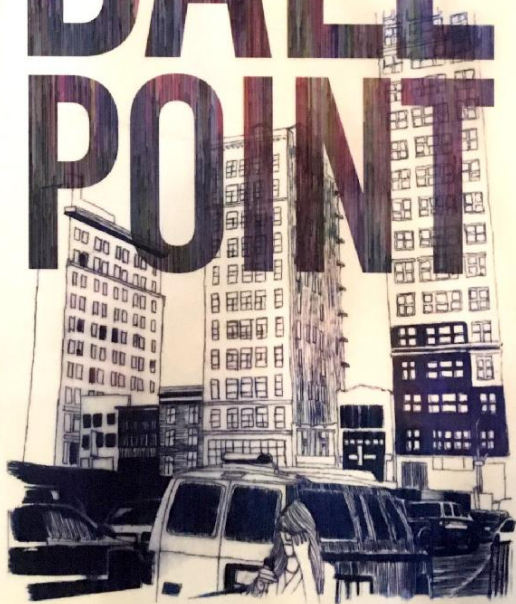


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MATT ROTA

EXPERIMENTATION,  
EXPLORATION, AND  
TECHNIQUES IN INK

# BALL POINT



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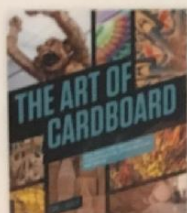
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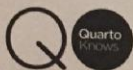


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# THE ART OF BALL POINT

MATT ROTA  
EXPERIMENTATION,  
EXPLORATION, AND  
TECHNIQUES IN INK





Image Highlight:

Joo Leo Kang  
Still Life with Insects: #5 & #7, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
25 x 18 inches  
(63.5 x 46 cm)



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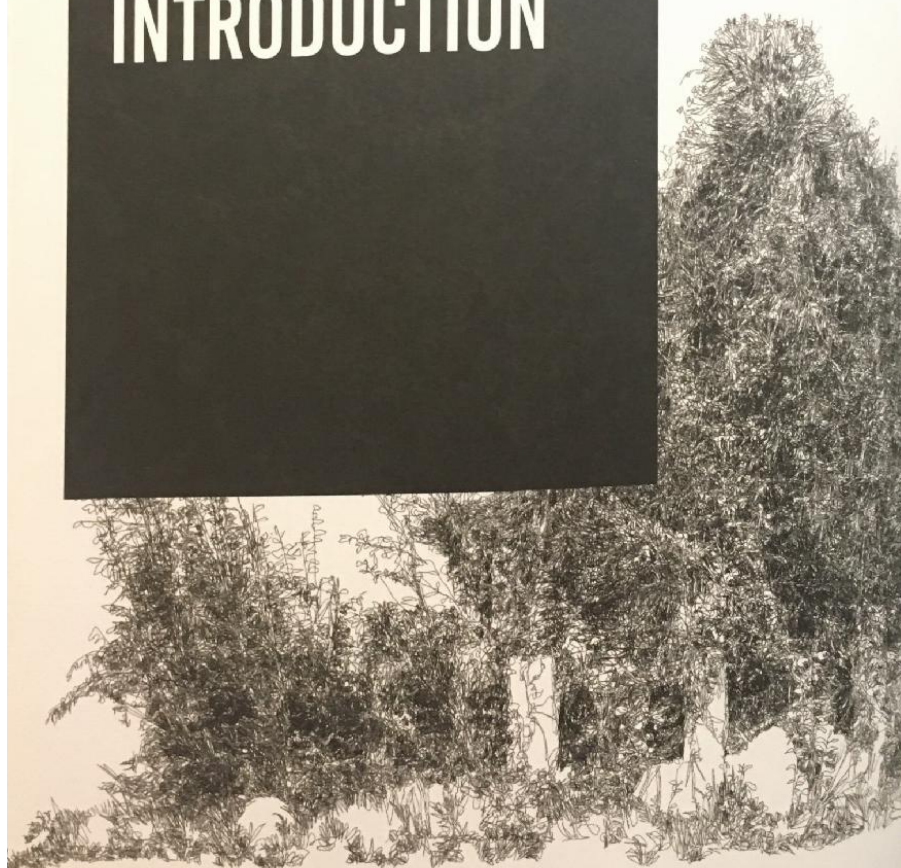
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# INTRODUCTION



Hannah Cheliew  
#crowell, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
26 x 40 inches  
(66 x 101.6 cm)

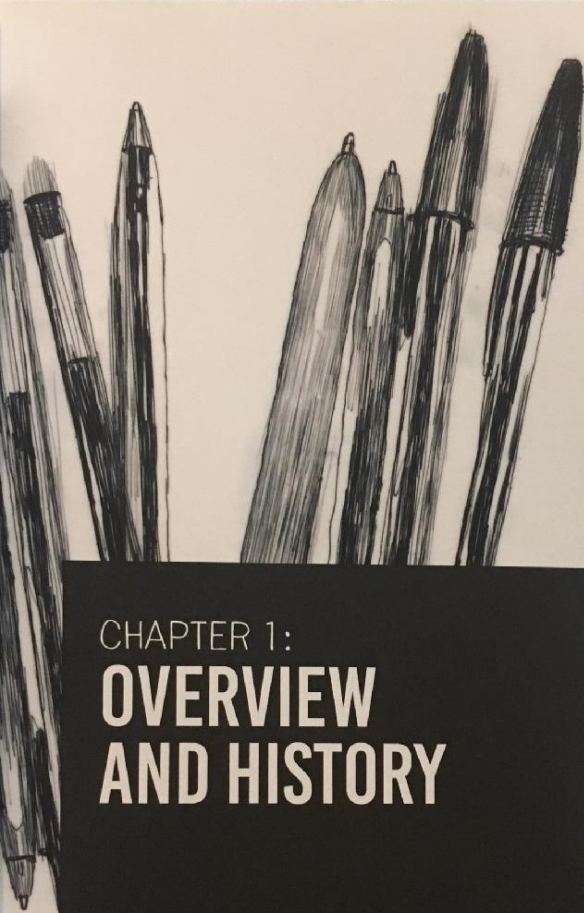
The history of the ballpoint pen is a well-known, well-documented affair. It is the story of the evolution and refinement of a design. The pen was not so much an invention as a cobbling together of already existing ideas into a transformative new product: the roller ball tip was previously used in deodorant; the internal ink well was previously used similarly in fountain pens; and the ink itself was based on quick-drying newspaper ink. Pens, in various forms, had existed for centuries, of course, but new technologies combined to make the pen as easy to use as possible. The ballpoint design solved previous pen troubles of leaking and smudging of ink, the main problems of the fountain pen. The fountain pen itself was invented to solve the problem of relying on an external ink supply, associated with the even older quill pen. It was the development of convenience in the age of mass production, specific to the era of postwar marketing and consumption. The story has an evolution and an organized step-by-step progression along the way to its most refined, perfected version. (See "A Brief History of the Ballpoint," page 19.) The pen itself had no specific intention beyond convenient writing. It has none of the artistry or grace of the pencil, brush, or quill. It was not intended as a designer's or an artist's tool. It was designed for the mundane, everyday tasks devoid of creativity and expression. It's telling that its first mass use was for keeping pilot's flight logs, and its greatest home today is in the office or classroom. The sterility of the pen has been blamed for the decline of the art of handwriting in the latter part of the twentieth century, yet from this simple tool has sprung an art form.

The goal is to show that a tool as simple as a pen, possessing a singular fixed line and a limited color range—in short, a highly limited expressive range—can be interpreted in wildly different ways, displaying the true variety and flexibility of this tool.

This book explores artwork created by contemporary artists who use ballpoint pen in a significant way. The book will look at the different techniques the artists use as well as how the pen relates to each artist's unique sensibilities and ideas. The artists featured here represent a variety of fields and disciplines within the current international art world, including illustrators, designers, and fine artists creating work for show in galleries. Their techniques vary widely from abstraction to observational to classical realism. For each, the pen means something different, and each artist has his or her own reason for using ballpoint. The goal is to show that a tool as simple as a pen, possessing a singular fixed line and a limited color range—in short, a highly limited expressive range—can be interpreted in wildly different ways, displaying the true variety and flexibility the pen is capable of. The artists demonstrate what happens when such a simple tool is so widespread as to be disseminated through a global culture and how much potential and thoughtfulness different artists see in this tool. It's as much a catalog of the potential of the pen as it is the variety of visions a simple tool can inspire, what different artists are capable of seeing in the pen, and what sort of potential they can imagine into it.







## CHAPTER 1: **OVERVIEW AND HISTORY**

The ballpoint pen's limitations dictate a certain style of drawing, a way of approaching the traditional craft of draftsmanship. By contrast, the history of the art of ballpoint has no clear narrative; there is little evolution of a common idea surrounding the pen that artists and enthusiasts congregate around. The history of its use in the world of art is a disconnected history, appearing largely in isolated instances.



## THE BALLPOINT AS A MEDIUM FOR ARTISTS

The first significant artistic consideration given to the ballpoint was by the Argentinian Futurist Lucio Fontana. At the outbreak of World War II, Fontana was living in Italy, where he was influenced by the popular Italian Futurist movement. Futurism as an artistic movement focused on ideas of technology, motion, and industrialization across a wide range of mediums. After the war started, Fontana fled back to his home in Argentina. It was there that Fontana came in contact with Biró's new pen, and he began using it in preliminary drawings for future works.

Fontana's own ideas about art were rooted firmly in abstraction; he developed the concept of spacialism, based on the idea that "matter should be transformed into energy to invade space in a dynamic manner." He believed artists should take advantage of new techniques in art made possible by scientific progress. He used many new mediums for the first time, such as the television and black lights. The use of ballpoint pen can be seen in this light in relation to his work and through him, has developed an association with later artists and works concerned with Futurist thinking. (The pen was marketed by Biró as the pen of the future. Reynolds' first pen was the Reynolds Rocket, evoking movement and excitement associated with progress and the future. An early BIC ad campaign referred to the pen as the "Atomic Pen.")

Arte Povera, an Italian art movement of the 1960s, owes much inspiration to the work of Fontana and other Italian artists of his generation. The Arte Povera group included the artist Alighiero Boetti, who would create many prominent works using the ballpoint pen. His use of the pen was in conjunction with his belief that artists needed to use preexisting materials. In his process, Boetti sought forms of expression



Alberto Giacometti  
Head of a Bearded Man (copy) and Head of a Man, c. 1958  
Ballpoint pen on wove paper  
12.4 x 10 inches  
(31.4 x 25.6 cm)

that detached his own hand as a way to create a truer expression. An example of how he used ballpoint this way was in a series of drawings, including works such as *Ononimo* (1974) and *Mettere al Mondo il Mondo* (1973 to 75), where each consisted of a field of marks created with pen. He preferred ballpoint because of the unmixed pure blueness of its ink, as opposed to, say, the idea of mixing paint to attain the same color or any specific color. The blue was preexisting in the nature of the pen, and therefore a pure expression of the tool's quality. Each drawing was delegated specific guidelines for the marks. The drawings were carried out under his instruction, but were in fact executed by a team of students.

Other artists using the medium in this era include Alberto Giacometti and Jean Dubuffet. Their interest was relegated mostly to the presence or convenience of the pen, and it played into their own interest as sketchers and doodlers. Cy Twombly's use of pen can be seen in a similar light. The significance of the use of pen in each artist's work was not, in fact, to create something new; rather, the focus was on integrating the pen into the artist's own well-established drawing vernacular.

Kippenberger's Hotel drawings turn the mindlessness of doodles into deep interior explorations—intense abstraction of the artist's psyche.





With these artists, the ballpoint pen does not reveal something new in their work, nor do they use it to express something yet undiscovered in their own thinking. It should be important to note that all the artists mentioned so far used the ballpoint as an auxiliary tool. It was not the main attraction or focus of their work. It wasn't until the 1980s that various artists started making the ballpoint a central tool for their work. The artists Jan Fabre, Il Lee, and Martin Kippenberger each has a unique take and approach derived from the medium, relying specifically on ballpoint's own properties. Fabre famously locked himself in a room for days, covering every inch of the space with ballpoint drawing (*The Bic-Art Room*, 1981), then later, the entire exterior of a nineteenth-century castle in Belgium (*Kasteel Thvili*, 1990), overpowering the majestic structure with ballpoint blue. The castle cuts a stark contrast against the iconic, and utilitarian, blue ink.

Similarly, Il Lee finds elegance in the consistency of the pen's line and something of a meditative approach in the repetitive process of creating giant fields of blue from layering the simple restrained line of the pen, again elevating the simplicity to a spiritual relationship with the viewer. The clouds of blue envelope the viewer, gently overpowering the audience in what can be seen again as a contradiction to the mundane context of the pen. And Kippenberger's *Hotel* drawings turn the mindlessness of doodles into deep interior explorations—intense abstraction of the artist's psyche. These codify the act of doodling and daydreaming as profound soul-searching activities. In each case, the ballpoint pen displays the potential to reach far beyond its simplicity to scale the heights of human reflection. This work demonstrates the artist's desire to express profound states of exploration and expression using a common object of modernity, a novelty item designed for the consumer class.

#### A SINGULAR DESIGN

The idea of a pen that carries its own ink is an extension of the innovations pioneered by the fountain pen, the first pen that could hold its own ink. Though the fountain pen in many ways is the last in a line of designs that started with the basic quill pen, the resemblance of the fountain to the ballpoint is in its internal ink. The design of the ballpoint pen, however, is highly unique in its own right, and a complete break from the notion of a quill design. It is the singular design of a writing utensil created in the modern era.

## HOW A BALLPOINT PEN WORKS

The ballpoint pen is one of the most prominent, visible, and successful examples of a manufactured consumer product to come out of the postwar industrial age. The manufactured materials that constitute the pen include plastic for the barrel and ink cartridge (specifically, thermosetting plastic, or phenolic resins, plastics that remain permanently hard after being heated, molded, and cooled), brass for the tip, brass or aluminum for the construction of the body, and tungsten carbide for the ball. Ink, the most distinct and important innovation of the ballpoint pen, is made up of 40 to 50 percent dye and is combined with lubricants, thickeners, and preservatives, all of which are dispersed in oleic acid, castor oil, or sulfonamide plasticizer.

Brass is used because of its light weight and corrosion resistance, thermoplastic materials because of their hardness, but also their flexibility, and the tungsten carbide ball, where the tool's namesake comes from, is used for its resistance to warping. The surface of the ball is covered with thousands of tiny holes connected by tiny channels that allow the ball to retain ink within it, as well as spread the ink across its surface. The ink is the key to the pen's success; the story of the evolution of the pen is largely the evolution of the ink itself. The ink is thick and dries quickly so as not to smudge, but it is not too thick that it will clog the pen or dry up in the tube.

The ball was designed as a way of sealing the ink off from the air, which will dry it, and as a way of preventing the ink from leaking; it's also the object that delivers the ink to the paper. In most cases, gravity delivers the ink to the tip, though in some cases, pressurized and spring-loaded piston designs are also used. Only the Fisher space pen is designed to be able to draw upside down; no other ballpoint model can accomplish this.



---

A ballpoint drawing by its very nature is detailed, intimate, and, as a result, almost always cerebral. It requires of the artist a patience that a pencil or a brush does not demand.

---

# WHY USE A BALLPOINT FOR ARTWORK?

For artists working in ballpoint today, the attraction is usually one of two things. The first reason given is often that of convenience. Ballpoint pens are the most prevalent writing tool on hand at any moment, and by their sheer presence alone, they make their use as an art tool inevitable.

However, this is a sort of passionless response. When the use is only convenience, it speaks to none of the qualities of the pen as a tool of expression, only to the lack of anything else present at the moment of desire and inspiration. But this mere convenience also conceals the secret power of the tool, of which the user may be unaware . . . imagine the lack of such abundance: a hotel room with no pen, when, late at night, an idea is stirred; a bar where, once inspiration strikes, there is no tool at arm's length that draws so easily on a napkin or paper menu. Imagine how many ideas would be lost without the direct connection that the ballpoint supplies from imagination to reality without any effort. With this convenience, the path from abstraction to reality has become like

breathing, like a bottomless cup of water with which no one should ever be thirsty again. The invisibility of this convenience is so often taken for granted that the revelation of such abundance is relegated to the term *convenience*, assigning the tool a mediocrity that threatens to undermine its importance.

The second reason for the use of the tool can at times be equally invisible. It's obvious not so much in the conscious mind of the artist, but it can be seen represented in the work, and so speaks for itself. This reason is relative to the pen's technical qualities, in the constant flow of ink, the convenience of not having to sharpen, dip, or refill the pen during the course of a drawing. The significance of this quality is often overlooked by artists born after the 1950s, when ballpoint pens replaced fountain pens. This quality facilitates a frame of mind in an artist, which, previous to the pen's invention, would have been impossible. The frame of mind is an unbroken focus, the ability to lose oneself in a drawing completely, a type of meditation that is seen so often in the art that comes from the pen.

This focus, coupled with the fine fixed point of the pen, a tip that is limited to the thinnest mark, helps create the kind of drawing that demands focus. A ballpoint drawing by its very nature is detailed, intimate, and, as a result, almost always cerebral. It requires of the artist a patience that a pencil or a brush does not demand.

It's difficult to determine whether it is that the pen's limitations influence the artist or that artists that prefer ballpoint are predisposed to a way of thinking that is sympathetic to the nature of the pen, but the result tends to be highly focused work. This is the mind-set that allows people to get lost in their work, whether it's a doodle, a sketchbook page, or a drawing the size of a wall or building. The drawing that comes from a ballpoint pen is labored and focused. It relies on the wrist more than the whole arm, and it's intimate even on a grand scale.

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## WHAT IS A PEN?

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An anti-art tool

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A tool that expresses  
logic and restraint

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An attempt to recall  
adolescent abandon as  
a creative process

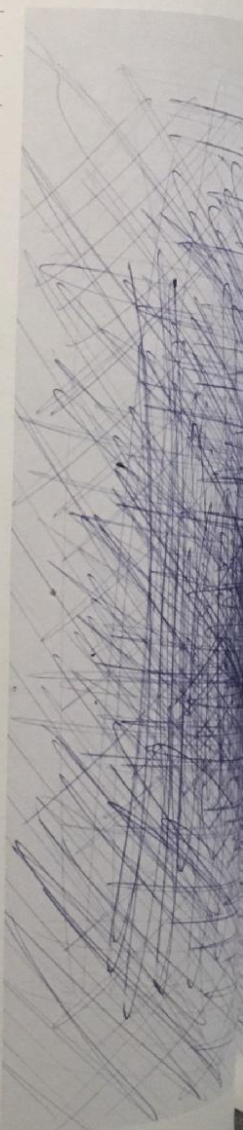
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### STATUS AS A TOOL

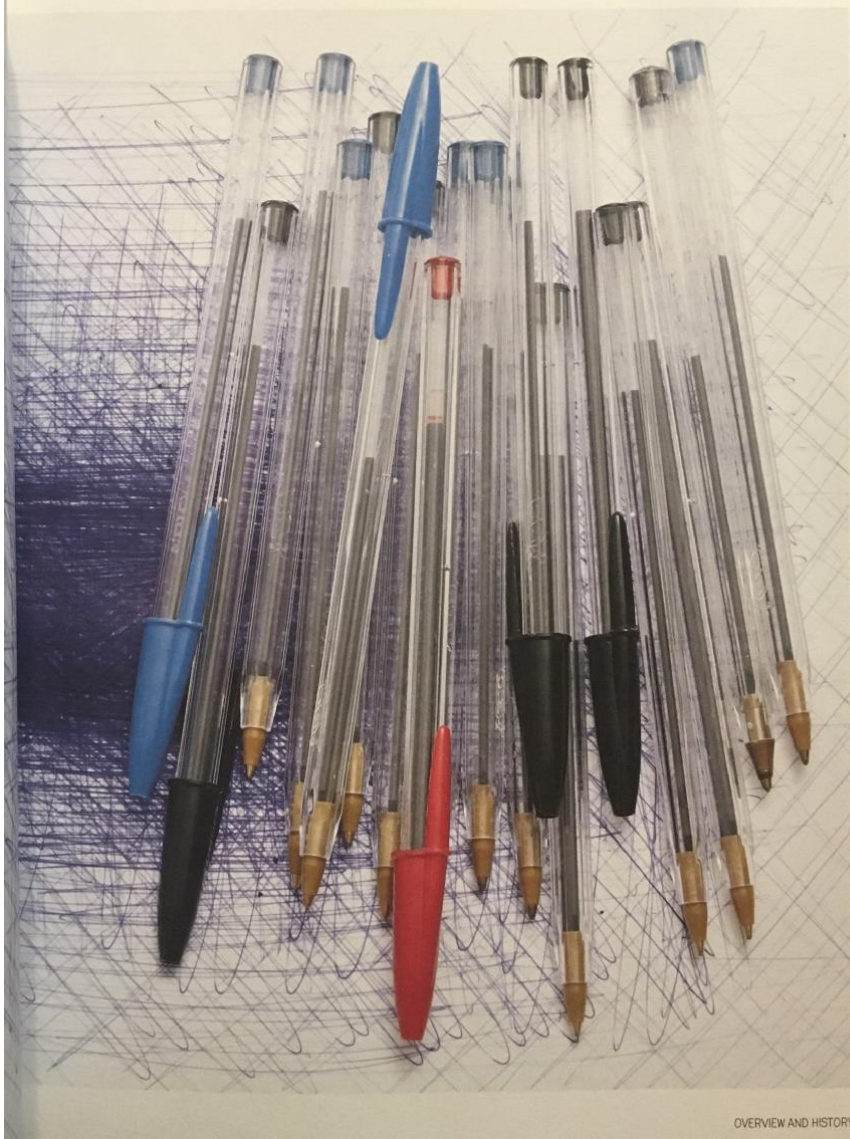
The attraction to the pen, beyond just its formal quality, has much to do with its status as a utensil for art. There is no consistent view or perspective but multiple interpretations of the tool. There is a group of thought that comes from its status as a nontraditional, anti-art tool; it has an outsider status. People who associate with this tend to relate to or are part of "outsider art," or lowbrow movements. This can be reflected in the subjects these artists choose, such as tattoos or reinterpretations of snapshots, luchadores, reproductions of sketches or graffiti designs, and other "non-art" subjects. The pen's association as lowbrow also encourages artists to use it as a tool to reinterpret classical or highbrow subjects, such as Lenny Mace's *Mona Lisa*.

The pen's status as an industrial-age tool, a product of manufacturing, is an attraction for others who view the pen as modern. The ballpoint can be seen as having associations with other forms of mechanical drawing tools, which negate personal expression in a minimalist sort of way by taking the ego out of the mark, forming a more perfect expression, a clarity of the modern industrial age; it is a tool that expresses logic and restraint and thus makes it elegant.

For others, it's a tool of nostalgia, used by artists with a carefree mentality toward drawing. The pen in this way is synonymous with innocence, recalling a doodle made during a phone call or a way to distract oneself during a high school lecture by scribbling in the margins of a notebook. The art that springs from this impulse by a mature artist is an attempt to recall adolescent abandon as a creative process.





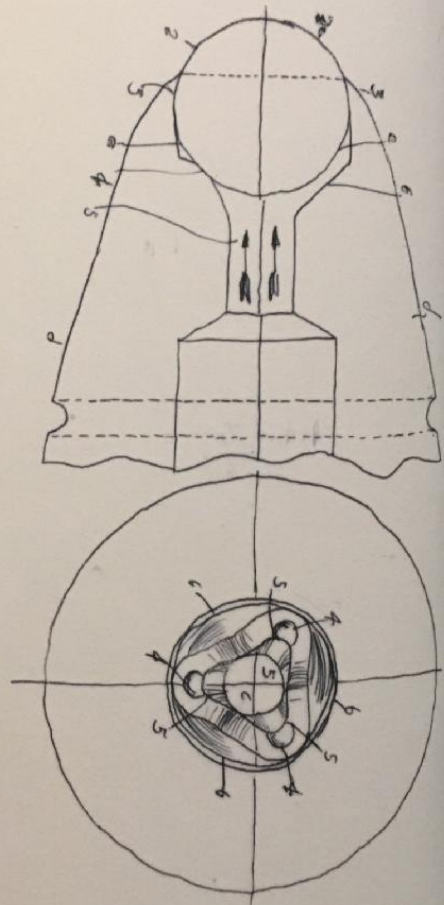




Below:  
 Author's sketches of figures  
 from U.S. Patent No. 239006,  
 entitled "Writing instrument"



Author's sketches of figures  
 from U.S. Patent No. 2734484,  
 entitled "Ball Point Pen"



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BALLPOINT

The first ballpoint model was patented by the American leather tanner and inventor John J. Loud, who had intended the tool to be used for marking and drawing on his leather products. The problem with the original design was the coarseness of the ball, which prevented it from drawing on delicate surfaces like paper. The ink also was a problem due to smearing.

After the initial patent was issued to Loud, more than 350 patents on similar ball-type pen designs were issued during the following 30 years, but none proved successful until Laszlo Biro's design, the problems always being with the ball size and ink viscosity. Ink was the primary focus of Biro's design; he was the first to try using newspaper ink. His design required free-flowing ink that dried quickly, but not within the tube or on the ball. The ink is largely dye based rather than pigment based so as not to clog the pen.

Laszlo Biro was born to a Jewish family in Hungary. He sought the help of his chemist brother Georg and secured the financial backing and business partnership of Andor Goy. The group set about developing the first functioning design of what would become the ballpoint pen. Biro displayed his pen at the Budapest International Fair in 1931. A modified design, patented by Biro and Goy in 1938, is more or less the design still used today.

Paralleling the development of the pen was the political transition and turmoil in Europe that would eventually lead to World War II. By the end of 1938, anti-Jewish laws were going into effect, forcing the Biro family to flee. The brothers settled in Argentina and secured financing for new patents and a manufacturing plant.

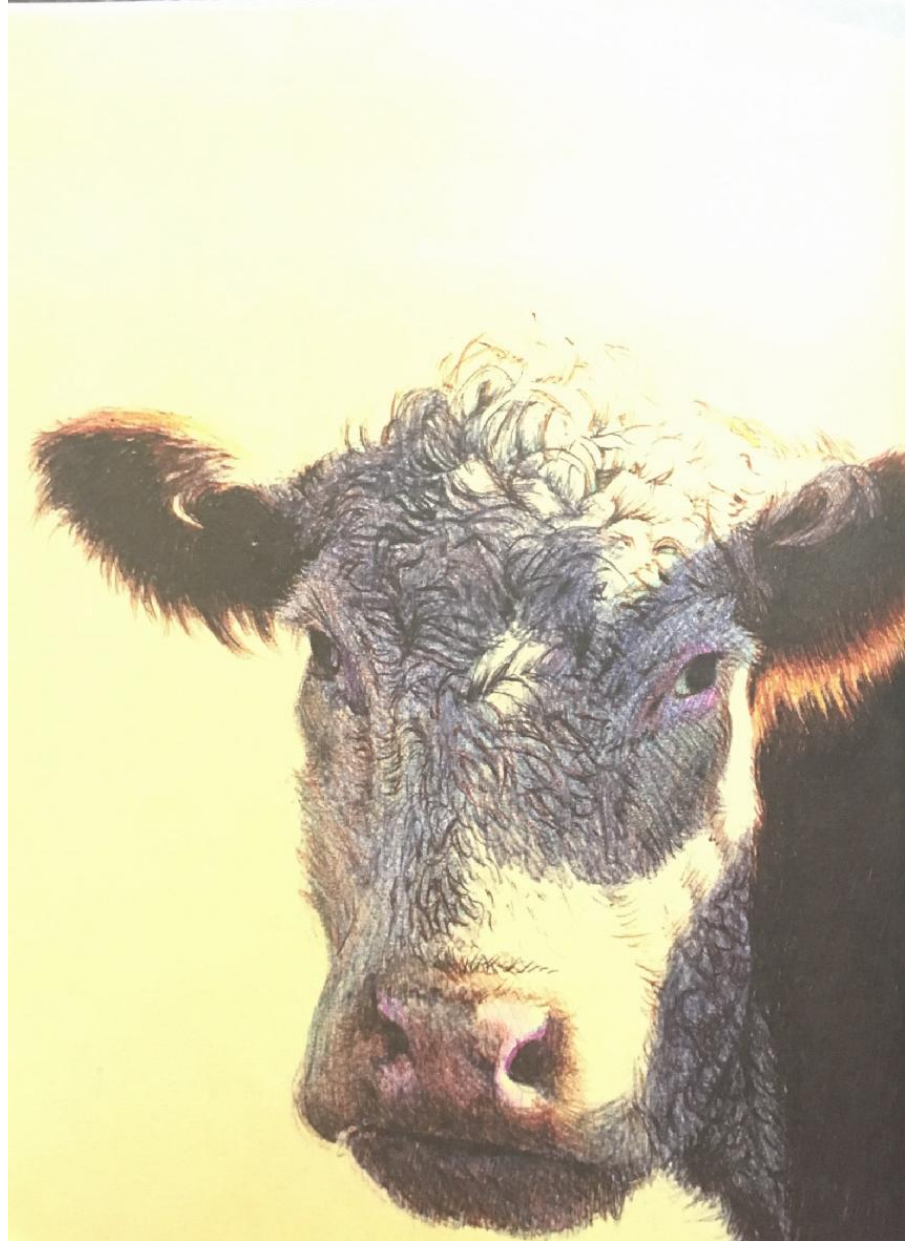
The first commercial pens were marketed in 1944, and initially they were a failure. The design, relying on a gravity delivery system, did not deliver ink accurately to the tip unless the pen was held perfectly upright, so creating a steady flow was problematic. This design was updated with a capillary design. The ball was redesigned as a rough stainless steel ball, which gripped the paper better and better spread ink. This new improved model was marketed throughout the country with greater, but still limited, success.


One of the initial contacts the brothers had made in Buenos Aires was Harry Martin, a British accountant living in South America at the time. Martin was aware that at that time, the British Royal Air Force was having trouble with writing utensils at high altitudes; the fountain pen was prone to leaking, and the officers were looking for a new design good for keeping flight logs while in the air. Martin saw a potential solution in the ballpoint design. He met with the Royal Air Force representative in Buenos Aires, as well as the U.S. representative, whom upon seeing the pen had Martin flown to Washington to demonstrate it for the United States Air Force. From there he traveled to London to demonstrate it for the Royal Air Force. This led to the first major contract for Biro, with the British government ordering 30,000 pens.

Several innovators and manufacturers, including Eberhard Faber and Milton Reynolds, made improvements and refinements following the war.

Societe Bic was the company started in 1945 (at the time called Societe PPA) by Baron Marcel Bich. The company would go on to produce iconic brands of disposable razors, lighters, and ballpoint pens. Between 1949 and 1950, Bich would design the next major iteration of the ballpoint pen, adjusting materials and design to allow for a pen, eventually, that would be introduced to the U.S. market and sold for 19 cents apiece. Bich's innovation was to produce a high-quality pen in such great amounts as to keep the price as low as possible. It is said that Bich's pen can be considered one of the most successfully manufactured products of all time, with an estimated 14 million sold each day, and 100 billion sold globally since 1950 (the hundred billionth sold in September of 2006).

Bich's company would eventually become synonymous with low-cost, disposable, everyday products, such as the razor and the lighter, but the pen would be his most significant contribution to postwar Western culture. The impact of this idea is more profound than it may seem today, but considering the presence and availability of these objects to the point of near invisibility, it's hard to overstate the ballpoint's effect on contemporary society. Case in point: the BIC Crystal is included in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection. Features of the design include the see-through tube, made to allow the ink level to be visible, the hexagonal body modeled after a pencil, and a small hole in the side of the body to equalize pressure inside the pen. Recent models of the pen also feature a cap with a hole in the top, designed to prevent suffocation in the event the cap is inhaled.





Nicolas V. Sanchez  
*The Claim* I, detail, 2012  
Colored ballpoint pen  
3½ x 5½ inches  
(9 x 14 cm)

## CHAPTER 2: CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL

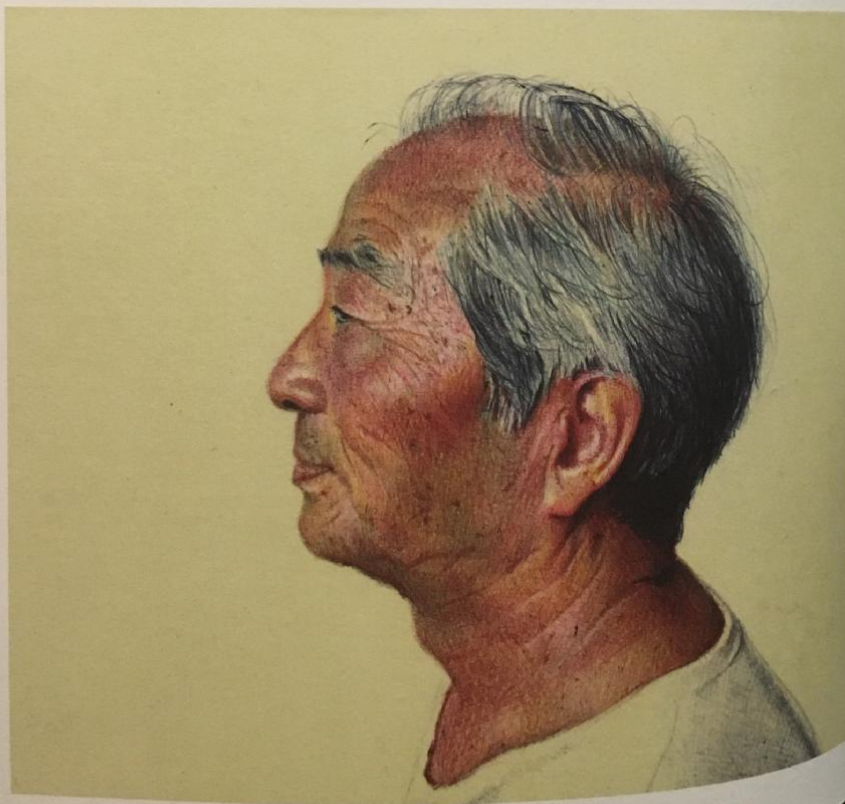
This chapter includes artists who are part of the long tradition of western European classical drawing, using techniques of illusionism, line, and crosshatching. The precision of a ballpoint lends itself well to the translation of these old traditions into a modern context by using a tool designed not so much for rendering as for technical precision and efficiency. These are artists using ballpoint primarily figuratively and using drawing techniques typical relegated to pencil, charcoal, or traditional pen and ink. They discover the figure through a combination of linear drawing and hatching for shadows and volume. Although these drawings reflect an observational point of view and capture a likeness to their subject, this technique should not be confused with photorealism or impressionistic realism. Instead, here the lines are used to create an illusion of form and volume. The result can be a somewhat idealized depiction rather than a photographic replication of the subject.



FEATURED ARTIST:

# NICOLAS V. SANCHEZ

NICOLAS SANCHEZ BEGAN DRAWING IN BLACK INK AT HIS LEISURE WHILE ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL AT THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART. ASSIGNMENTS AND STUDIO TIME WERE DEMANDING, SO DRAWING IN A SKETCHBOOK ON THE SUBWAY OR ON A PLANE WAS A WAY TO RELEASE THAT PRESSURE AND CREATE SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT MEANT TO BE EXHIBITED. IT ALLOWED FOR A HEALTHY STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS.





Opposite:  
Wang Family,  
detail, 2012  
Colored ballpoint pen  
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches  
(9 x 14 cm)

Top:  
Blue, 2014  
Lead and colored  
ballpoint pen  
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches  
(9 x 14 cm)

Bottom:  
Antepazidos, detail, 2014  
Colored ballpoint pen  
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches  
(9 x 14 cm)



For Nicolas, ballpoint pen offers a sense of freedom. There is no preliminary pencil drawing. He starts with the pen and just continues drawing. "There's no taking it back," he says, "so why worry about it? It pushes me to become more disciplined and develop a sense of agility when working with ink." He also works more quickly in ink, finishing a drawing much faster than work in graphite or oil paint because of its permanent quality.



## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: COLOR

Even though the level of finish and description are similar from drawing to drawing, there is nothing cohesive about the start and subsequent process in each individual work.

Nicolas doesn't use a specific set palette of colors. He uses a variety of pens and brands from BIC to Parker to no brand pens "borrowed" from a bank counter, restaurant, or his grandma's house. He achieves a range of tone and color through the slow and meticulous layering of crosshatch mark making.

Most of his drawings are done in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  x  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (9 x 14 cm) Moleskine books because of the high-quality paper. He also works on paper with a similar tone as the paper found in Moleskines for larger individual drawings.

Nicolas considers his Moleskine books completed works just the same as his large-scale oil paintings. The books are displayed in galleries in a way that allows people to see all the drawings inside. He has separate sketchbooks for keeping less finished sketches, ideas for future work, thoughts, and thumbnails. These are the "sketchbooks" he takes everywhere.

---

"Everything is strictly done in ballpoint pen from beginning to end, without the use of any other mediums. In the past, I had experimented with using a white gel pen to separate the tone of the paper from the drawing, but now all of my pen drawings are done with pure ballpoint pen."

---

Opposite:  
*The Claim* 33, detail, 2013  
Colored ballpoint pen  
2% x 5% inches  
(9 x 14 cm)

Below:  
*The Claim* 5, detail, 2013  
Colored ballpoint pen  
2% x 5% inches  
(9 x 14 cm)

"The color of my work comes from personal memories," Nicolas explains. "In my work, color reflects a time, a place, an event, a person. It's used in a traditional representational sense, but it sometimes serves as the main focus of a piece."

His drawings are built up with many layers of color and crosshatching. Sometimes the detail is so small, he has to revert to a mode of meditative pointillism.

*The Claim* is the title of a book Nicolas recently completed focusing on Midwest American imagery, which is one of the themes he explores in his studio practice. It features rural imagery that includes animals, spaces, and landscapes, imagery that was a central part of the environment he was surrounded by growing up in Michigan.

Some of Nicolas's sketchbooks focus completely on portraiture. His fascination with specific individuals and his personal relationships with them are the fuel for these drawings. There are books he keeps that strictly consist of people met from around the world while on artist residencies. The portraits are consistently restricted to a profile view, simply because he favors the design and because the angle relates specifically to the subject of portraiture.



FEATURED ARTIST:

# DINA BRODSKY

DINA BRODSKY IS PRIMARILY A PAINTER, THOUGH DRAWING, PARTICULARLY IN HER SKETCHBOOKS, IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF HER CREATIVE PROCESS, AKIN TO A VISUAL DIARY. DRAWING IN THEM IS A NECESSITY, LIKE EATING AND SLEEPING. SHE'S HAD A SKETCHBOOK IN HER BAG EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS OR SO. IT'S ONLY IN BALLPOINT, AND SHE CARRIES IT EVERYWHERE.





Cyposho:  
Sketchbook, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
12 x 9 inches  
(30.5 x 23 cm)

Below:  
Old House Drawing, 2014  
Mixed media on toned paper  
6 x 9 inches  
(15 x 23 cm)



The pen Dina draws with is always a Zebra ballpoint pen because it's the best brand she can find. A friend gave her one while she was still in school, during spring break at a coffee shop while they were drawing, and she's used the brand ever since. It's the only pen she's ever felt truly at home with.

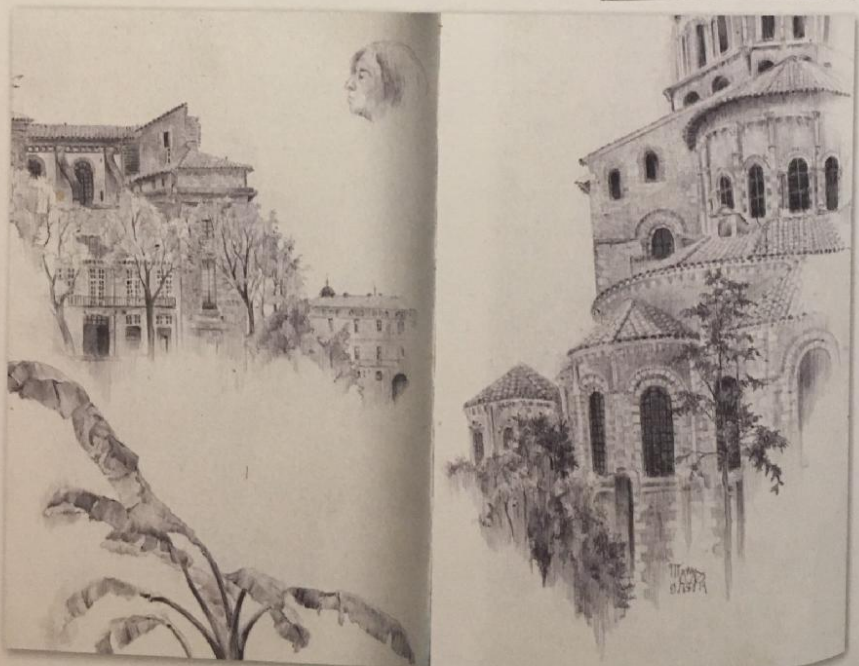
Some of her drawings are done on white paper, others on toned paper. She tones her paper with a mix of watercolor and Chinese white gouache, which gives the watercolor a bit of opacity. She also uses the gouache for highlights when working on toned paper.

Because Dina is primarily a painter, her sketchbooks become more about play, or research, or just fun, the thing she gets to experiment with when not working on more finished oil paintings. Occasionally, she will use her sketchbook drawings as preparatory sketches for more finished work, but most of the time they don't make it out of the sketchbook.

Below:  
Sketchbook, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
12 x 9 inches  
(30.5 x 23 cm)

Opposite:  
Sketchbook #2, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
6 x 9 inches  
(15 x 23 cm)

Using toned paper for drawings is one way to help prevent overworking them the same way she may fuss over a painting. The tone stops her from trying to capture the mid-tones with a pen.



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"Old buildings, unlike people and animals, tend to stand still, and, unlike landscapes, which (for me) require color to depict, tend to lend themselves readily to ballpoint pen."

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## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: TONE AND SHADING

As a painter, Dina is incredibly compulsive, reworking (and possibly, she thinks, overworking) everything half to death. The drawings are the part of her practice where she can relax.

In some drawings, she will start on paper toned with a watercolor wash. She will draw over the tone with ballpoint, working the drawing up to the level that includes the darks. The wash works as a mid-tone, and she uses a fine brush and white gouache to work out the lighter areas and the highlights. Using toned paper for drawings is one way to help prevent overworking them the same way she may fuss over a painting. The tone stops her from trying to capture the mid-tones with a pen. Instead, this makes her focus only on capturing the darkest tones with ink. The combination of the mid-tone and white gouache for highlights helps modulate the information.







Left:  
*Sketchbook*, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
12 x 9 inches  
(30.5 x 23 cm)

Right:  
*Pumpkins*, 2014  
Ballpoint pen and mixed  
media on toned paper  
8 x 9 inches  
(15 x 23 cm)



The drawings *Pumpkins* and *Old House* were drawn using this method. Both were started with the intention of being more serious finished drawings than her other sketchbook works, and both were finished using photo reference. *Old House* was entirely from a photo, and *Pumpkins* was started from life (at the farmers' market in Union Square) but finished later from a photograph of the scene.

The drawings take anywhere from a few minutes for sketching people in cages or at airports to five or six hours for more finished drawings of churches and castles and other things. She'll stay in one location and draw as long as she can, stopping due to weather or time. For example, it'll start to rain, or she has lingered for five hours over a single cup of coffee while drawing the street in front of a café she's sitting at, or her hand may begin to cramp. These are the determining factors as to when a drawing is done and a composition is complete. In other words, completion is not an aesthetic decision so much as a practical concern. Because they are sketchbook drawings, and not for public display, there's no one to tell her that something is too elaborate, or not elaborate enough, or when it should be done.

Dina's locations tend to be cycling stops when she is traveling or favorite drawing places, cafés, and neighborhoods when she is home in New York. Dina determines a location based on the presence of a subject she can spend several hours looking at in combination with a place she can sit for hours in relative comfort without being in anyone's way. Spending a few hours drawing in a place tends to turn it into a happy memory.

Her cycling trips are long-distance treks mostly through western and northern Europe whenever she has a month to concentrate entirely on cycling, camping, drawing, and sketching. The areas she travels through have a long history still present in the weathered architecture. Dina has always been fascinated by old, deteriorating things and by what time and entropy will do to man-made objects, so the subject of architecture is a natural attraction for her.

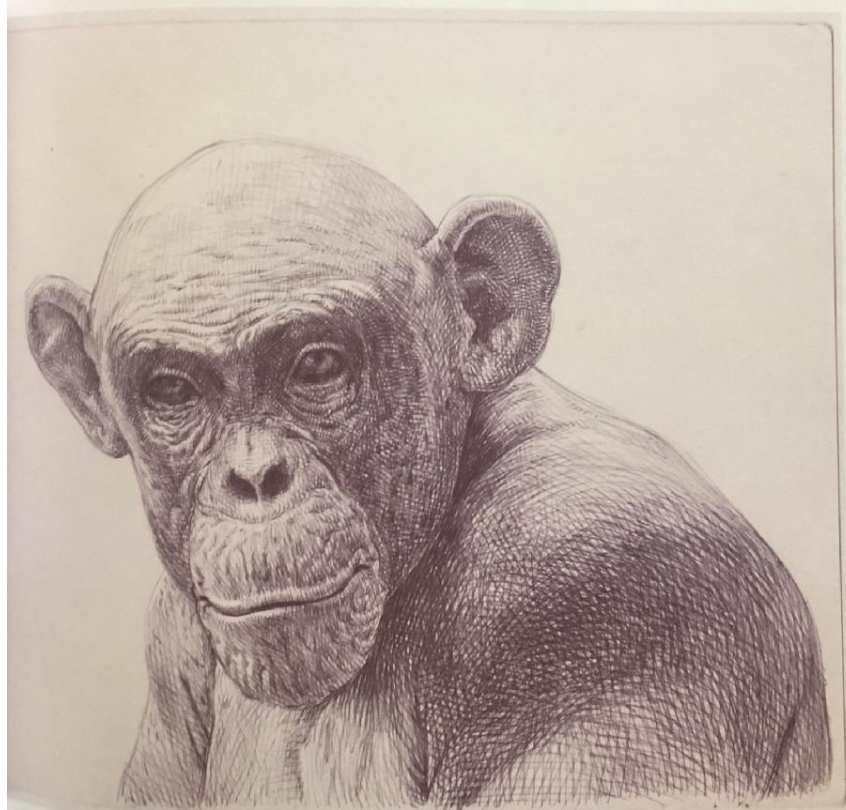
While drawing architecture, Dina does not trust her eye to be able to interpret perspective accurately. She will locate the horizon line and the vanishing point and sketch in a few very faint lines toward it that will help structure the rest of the drawing.

Image Highlights:

Oono Park  
Chimpanzee, 2014  
Ink on paper  
7 x 11 inches  
(18 x 28 cm)

Page 34:  
The Encounter, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
6 x 9 inches  
(15 x 23 cm)

Page 34:  
Untitled, 2003  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
6 x 9 inches  
(15 x 23 cm)









USING ONLY BALLPOINT TO DESCRIBE THE SHADOWS AND LIGHT IN AN IMAGE CAN LEAD TO OVER-RENDERING AN IMAGE BECAUSE AN ENTIRE RANGE OF VALUE, LIGHTS, MID-TONES, AND SHADOWS CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE CLEARLY. WORKING ON A TONED GROUND AND USING WHITE ACRYLIC CAN BE A WAY TO MODULATE THE THREE VALUES INTO MANAGEABLE CATEGORIES. DESCRIBING LIGHT IN A DRAWING IS A PROCESS OF EDITING BECAUSE ALL OF THE INFORMATION THE EYE SEES CANNOT BE RELAYED IN THE DRAWING. THUS, DRAWING TENDS TO BE A PROCESS OF SIMPLIFYING THE DETAILS, SAY, IN A SHADOW, DOWN TO MANAGEABLE ABSTRACT SHAPES. SEPARATING THE THREE STAGES OF VALUE INTO THREE SEPARATE MEDIUMS SIMPLIFIES THE PROCESS TAKING THE BURDEN OFF THE PEN TO DESCRIBE EACH CLEARLY. IN THIS PROCESS, THE STAGES OF VALUE ARE EACH ASSIGNED A MEDIUM, THE DARKEST DARKS ARE DELEGATED TO THE PEN, THE MID-TONES TO WATERCOLOR, AND THE HIGHLIGHTS TO ACRYLIC.

EXERCISE:

## DRAWING ON TONED PAPER



The first step of the process is to tone a sheet of paper before doing any drawing. To achieve an even tone, mix enough watercolor to create a wash over the entire paper. You can prepare this on a watercolor palette or in a small cup, and then with a large, clean brush, spread a single wash of clean water over the page. Then, while the page is still wet, apply the watercolor. This wet-on-wet technique will spread the watercolor evenly



across the page with no brushstrokes visible. Let the page dry completely. At this point, it is okay to lightly sketch in the composition with pencil. (If the drawing is done lightly, the pencil is easily erased later; if the pencil is overworked, it will leave a texture on the page that will make the ballpoint stage of the drawing more difficult.) It is good at this stage to also indicate where the highlights will be painted in.



The next step is to begin drawing with ballpoint. The ballpoint's purpose here is to only capture the darkest darks, the shadows and outlines of objects, so this will be a somewhat simpler application of ballpoint than if there were no tone, as the watercolor is doing the job of occupying the middle ground.



Once the ballpoint is complete (it may be best to stop before the drawing looks done; understate the ballpoint, and don't fuss too much at this point), apply the acrylic in two stages. The first is as a wash that is transparent. Water down the white acrylic so that it is not completely opaque, and draw in the highlights with a brush like a watercolor wash. The wetness will activate the watercolor underneath the acrylic, blending the two and creating not a true white, but a lighter version of the

wash. When drawing in the highlights with the brush, it is important to follow the same sort of texture and mark making that was done with the pen. Apply areas of detail with a fine-tipped brush, so that the same marks achieved with the ballpoint can be mimicked with the brush.

Once this dries, look back at the reference, and identify a smaller portion of the highlights that are the brightest of the highlights. To this more narrow range

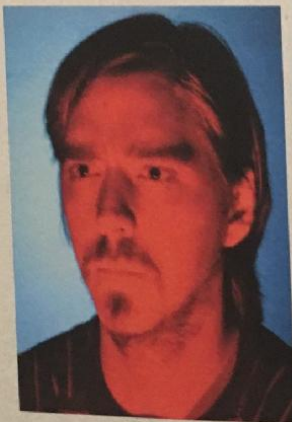
of white, apply the acrylic opaquely. The acrylic should not be watered down or transparent, but totally opaque, and it should not be applied over all of the transparent wash of acrylic, only the brightest sections.

In the end, this should leave four variations of tone, the darkest in ballpoint, the middle in watercolor, and two stages of highlight—the transparent wash of acrylic and the opaque.

EXERCISE:

# TYPES OF SHADING

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFERENT WAYS OF RENDERING AND SHADING CAN AFFECT THE SAME IMAGE.



It is import before starting a drawing to have a clear understanding of the type of marks that will be used to describe the detail in the image. Each type of mark expresses a particular mood unique in its own right. Once the mark is decided, it is important to remain consistent within the drawing. Lines used in shading represent the way light travels across the surface of an object, so each type of mark gives the surface of an object a unique texture, and as a result, a unique energy. The different marks can be used to describe the same light, but with radically different feelings.



Using a mark that moves vertically down the face gives a sense that the light is moving downward; the lines pull the eye up and down, but not across the face. The surface of the face as a result looks long and smooth, and the singular motion adds a heightened sense of drama, or action, giving the feeling that the light is moving and causing the eye to move across the image quickly, unimpeded by a crosshatch. This gives a similar effect of raining, or a waterfall.

The lack of outline in this drawing also gives a softer feeling to the face, as if it were emerging from smoke, or some kind of atmosphere; the face appears less solid without any defining structural lines. This could give the impression of the face being a reflection in a mirror or water, for instance.





The same face—still lacking definition from an outline—has hatching moving across it both vertically and diagonally, giving it a more volumetric feel, as if it is emerging from the darkness. The crosshatch makes the face feel as though it is coming forward. The lines are describing the roundness of the face; it occupies a more three-dimensional reality and feels less ephemeral.



The same face, this time defined by an outline, is more structurally solid, but less dramatic. The outline fixes the head in space, making it feel sturdier and more stationary; there is less of a sense of motion. However, the figure feels stronger, not just graphically, but also psychologically; the mood is very different from the first two, even though they are drawn from the same reference. Each technique gives a different mood and personality to the figure: the first two are more mysterious and dramatic, and the third is more solid and confident.



The fourth example is drawn with an outline, and uses stippling instead of hatching, employing short dashes instead of long strokes. This creates a less fluid motion and is far more halting to the eye as it moves over the face, as if moving across a textural surface made up of small hairs or little bumps. This type of shading creates a more intense emotion, forces the eye of the viewer to focus more, and implies stress or anxiety along with awareness. Areas in this face that have a concentration of stippling become areas of the most intense focus. Building up stippling around the eyes generates greater attention, giving the subject a more thoughtful expression.

EXERCISE:

# VOLUME WITH CROSSHATCHING



BALLPOINT HAS A FAIRLY FIXED MARK, WITHOUT THE VARIATION IN LINE WEIGHT A PENCIL OR QUILL HAS. THE EVENNESS PREVENTS A SINGLE LINE FROM CONVEYING SPACE OR WEIGHT, WHICH HELPS CREATE THE ILLUSION OF VOLUME. TO CREATE VOLUME WITH BALLPOINT, MORE DETAILED SHADING IS NECESSARY.



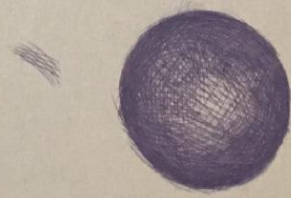
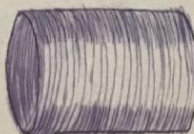
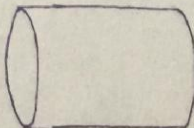
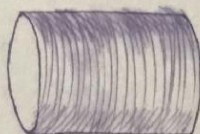
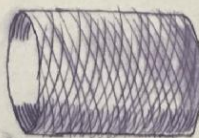


Crosshatching is used to create tonal shifts and to indicate the roundness of a surface. The best way to think about crosshatching is to picture the entire object wrapped in a thread, and the thread is like the line used to draw the hatching. The thread (or line) is only visible when it's in shadow. It may help to start the drawing by literally tracing a line around the entire object to understand how the line describes the form.

As the surface of a round object curves away in space (away from the viewer), the shadow will get darker; this is a graduated darkening. The gradation is achieved in two ways, by the lines converging or by hatching lines on top of the first set.

These lines cross over the lines underneath, thus the term *crosshatching*. The hatching of the lines can be nearly parallel (12 to 22 degrees) to give the shading a softer effect. Nearly perpendicular lines (up to 90 degrees in the hatching) give the shadow a sharper feeling and halt the flow of the lines.

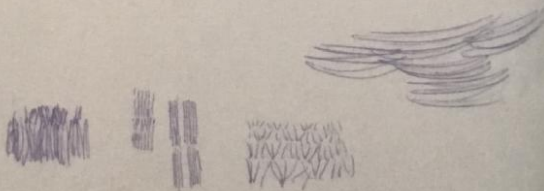
The lines can also be built up in more layers to create a fuller, or deeper, sense of space.



EXERCISE:

# CREATING A LANDSCAPE WITH TEXTURE AND MARKS (BUT NO OUTLINES)

MARKS IN A DRAWING CAN BE ASSIGNED TO SPECIFIC SURFACES TO DESCRIBE THEM, WITHOUT LITERALLY DEPICTING THEM. A MARK IS AN ABSTRACT INDICATOR OF INFORMATION. IN THIS EXERCISE, THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS ARE EACH ASSIGNED A SPECIFIC AND UNIQUE MARK. EACH MARK IS USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THAT SURFACE OR OBJECT TO DESCRIBE THE SURFACE OR TONALLY.







In this example, the grass is defined by a series of clustered dashes, usually three or more dashes at a time, and the dashes are curved slightly like blades of grass. They convey space as well as surface by diminishing in size as they are stacked on top of each other to give the impression of receding backward into the distance. The field of marks grows darker as it recedes, but also indicates a narrower range of

contrast, whereas the marks closer to the bottom (and closer to the viewer illusionistically) are more spread out and longer. The field created is generally lighter as it gets closer in space, but also there is a wider range of contrast within the clusters of marks. The marks used to describe the walls of the building are dashes as well, but they are stacked uniformly and flatly.



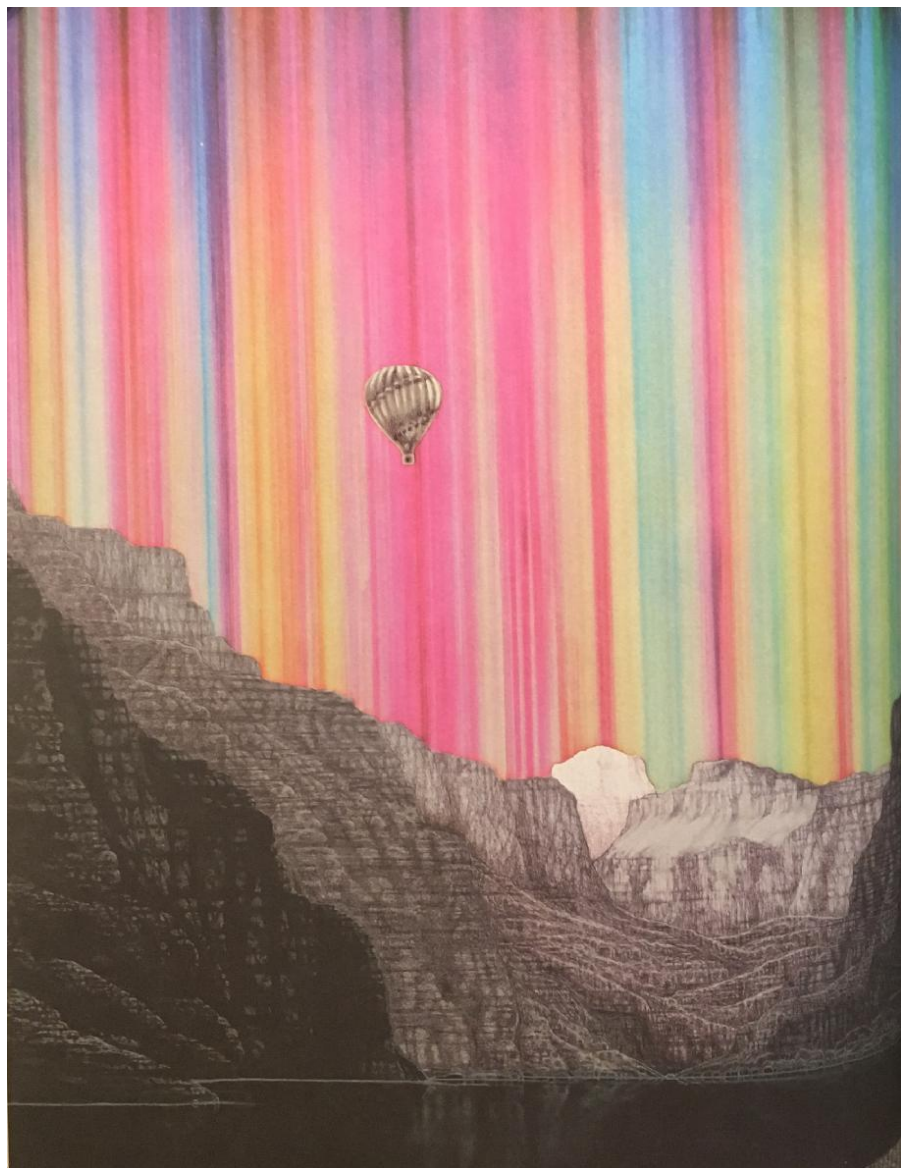
The marks are all even as they are stacked in rows on top of each other; this even stacking indicates a flat space, a wall that is not moving back in space. The space in between the dashes is filled in more tightly to add darkness to the shadows on the wall or spaced out more to create a sense of light.

The trees in the back are given long dashes, which prevent the detail from becoming as meticulous as in the wall or



grass and helps push the trees further back in space. Similar to the grass, the long dashes have a curve to imply the organic nature of the trees. The windows are given similar long dashes, but as with the difference between the grass and the wood, the dashes for the window are straight and rigid to communicate a flat, manufactured surface. This difference between curved and straight lines prevents the two surfaces from becoming confused with each other.

The sky is described in long, horizontal strokes. The horizontal orientation relays the sense of motion of clouds moving across the sky and also creates a sharp contrast between objects on the ground, which all have marks moving vertically.





Shane McDermott  
*Red Air*, 2013  
Ballpoint pen, oil,  
and resin on panel  
48 x 48 inches  
(122 x 122 cm)

## CHAPTER 3: CONTEMPORARY ABSTRACTION

The artists featured in this chapter are exploring the limitations and very nature of the pen. Unlike classical artists, each of these artists is finding a new way of drawing that stems from a unique quality found in ballpoint. This leads to a wide range of ideas about how to use the pen. The only common ground of these artists' work is the sense of exploration. In these processes, the medium can become the subject itself or in some way is integral to the overall concept of the work, by creating work based on the limitations and nature of ballpoint, these abstractions are only possible with the pen.

Below:  
Untitled, 2008  
Ballpoint  
12 x 12 inches  
(30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Opposite:  
Untitled, 2007  
Ballpoint  
16 x 12 inches  
(41 x 30.5 cm)

FEATURED ARTIST:

# JOANNE GREENBAUM



JOANNE GREENBAUM'S DRAWINGS JUST BEGIN. WHEN SHE'S DRAWING, SHE STARTS BY PICKING UP THE PEN AND SEEING WHAT HAPPENS, WITH NO GOAL IN MIND. SHE SOMETIMES SITS AND JUST SCRIBBLES; OTHER TIMES, IT'S SOMETHING MORE DETAILED AND ANALYTICAL. THE FORMS EMERGE AS SHE DRAWS. THE FORMS SHE CREATES COME FROM A PICTORIAL LANGUAGE THAT INTERESTS HER, MOSTLY A FICTIONAL ARCHITECTURE THAT ACTS AS A SCAFFOLDING TO MAKE IMPOSSIBLE SPACES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT THE DRAWINGS AS FORMS AND STRUCTURES, NOT SPECIFIC OR IN ANY WAY REFERRING TO THE REAL WORLD. THE DIMENSIONS AND GEOMETRY ARE IMAGINARY, PSYCHOLOGICAL.





Joanne is an abstract painter who uses a wide range of mediums, including oil, acrylic, markers, and colored pencils. She sculpts and also works in ballpoint pen.

To her, the pen is very conducive to overdrawing and creating depth, almost as if she could never go too far, never overwork a drawing; indeed, the deeper the drawing goes, the better it gets. Her drawings are a way to use energy, to make an artwork that she can hold in her hands and kind of fetishize over, working on them again and again.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: KNOWING WHEN IT'S FINISHED

Joanne tends to work on drawings in a pile, each drawing in different stages of completion, going back and forth between drawings until they are done. There is no set plan: sometimes the drawings are finished quickly and sometimes they go more slowly. Usually, the drawing is done when it looks complete, and sometimes it is complete simply when Joanne decides to stop working on it and move on to the next piece.

Joanne does not think of these in terms of a precious object that she is making, but a process, a way of communicating to herself that she is alive and this is her work, and she's working.

In creating her work, she is looking to create something visually fascinating for herself. It has to feel different from the work that came before and it has to challenge her as an artist; if it does, then the work has accomplished what it was intended to do. This could be considered the point behind her drawings, that the thing is, and that it was made. To use her hands and just make something meaningful feels like a radical idea.

Within this personal dialogue with herself, she acknowledges that what she sees in the work, and what it means to her, is not always what her audiences' experience will be.

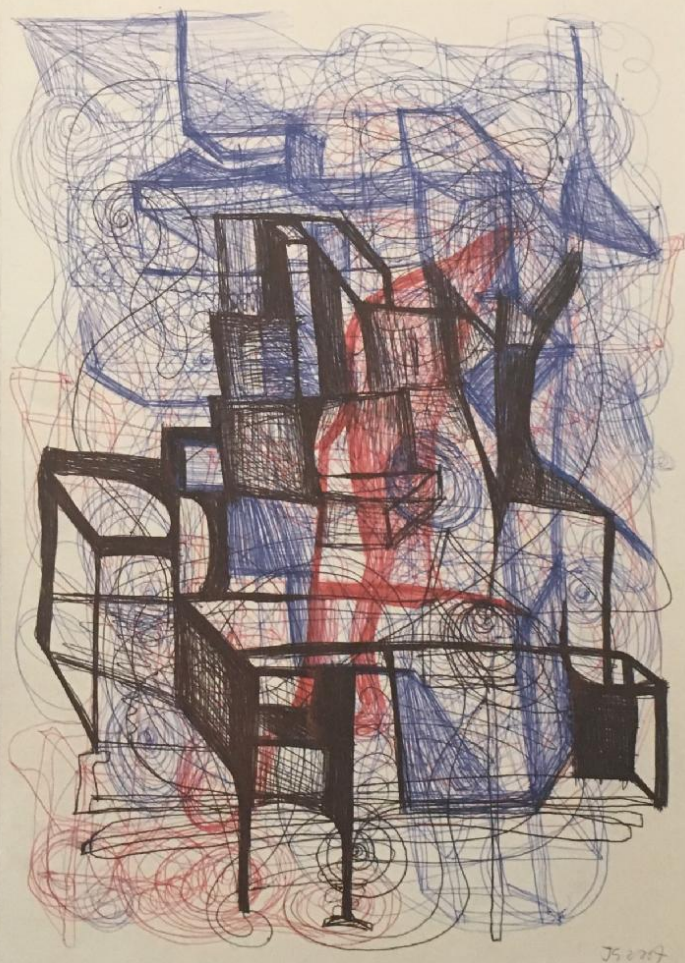
## BALLPOINT REFLECTIONS

Reflecting on her other work, Joanne says her painting, sculpture, and drawing all come from the same place, which is an interaction with the medium, a searching for the unique properties of each material; she waits for the material to reveal itself to her, to reveal a form or an object that is specific and inherent to the medium. When she started making sculpture in clay, it felt like a three-dimensional drawing in that she just blindly went in and let the material dictate what happened, similar to drawing in two dimensions. Joanne realized that she liked making tabletop sculptures so she could sit at a table, like drawing, and just let her mind wander and use that to dictate what the final outcome would be.



Left:  
Unfinished, 2003  
Ballpoint  
12 x 12 inches  
(30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Opposite:  
Unfinished, 2007  
Ballpoint  
16 x 12 inches  
(41 x 30.5 cm)



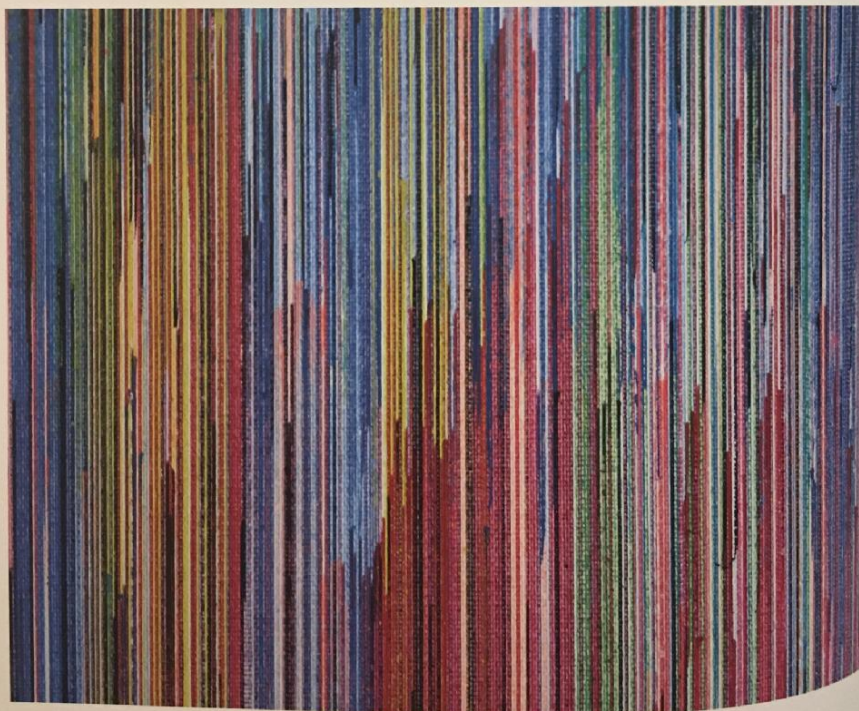
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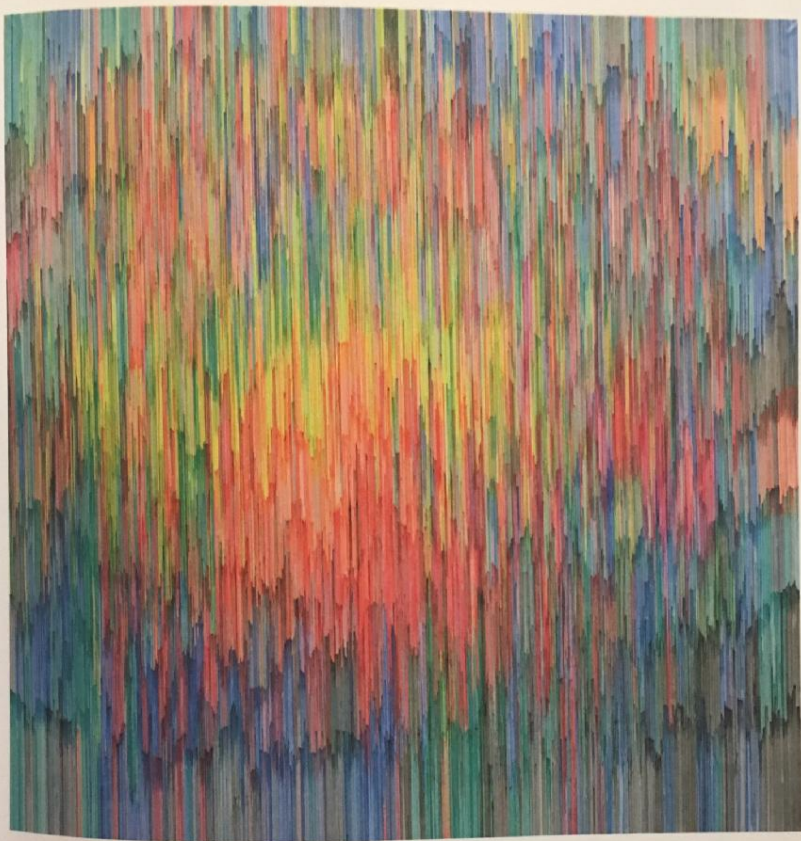
FEATURED ARTIST:

# JOAN SALÓ

JOAN SALÓ'S WORK INVOLVES CREATING A HARMONY OF STRAIGHT LINES USING A FULL SPECTRUM OF COLORED PENS. IN JOAN'S WORK, HIS MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE REFLECT THE CONCEPT, WHICH DRIVES THE PIECE. HIS DRAWINGS CAN BE SEEN AS LARGE EXPRESSIONISTIC WORKS, AND HIS PROCESS IS ENGINEERED TO EXPRESS A CLEAN, PURE, UNINHIBITED FORM OF EMOTION.







Opposite:  
Untitled,  
detail, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on  
canvas  
79 x 79 inches  
(200 x 200 cm)

Above:  
Untitled, 2010  
Ballpoint pen on  
canvas  
79 x 79 inches  
(200 x 200 cm)

The straight line removes his gesture, and personality, from the mark. The repeating and layering of nondescript straight lines, a practice that consciously evokes Tibetan mandala making, creates a meditative process, a sensation that can also be invoked in the viewer.

He strips out any superfluous marks, anything decadent, ornate, or purely decorative.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: LIMITATION AND MEDITATION

Joan has chosen a technique focused on limitation, using only straight lines, which reference the shape of the canvas by paralleling its edges. His process evolved out of a set of expressionistic standards where the mark is the focal point of artistic expression, the center of the artist's vocabulary. An extreme example of this thinking would be Jackson Pollock and the drips he uses. The personality of the mark is explored through the gesture of the line or stroke. Joan's current process evolved from this idea.

His earlier work relied on an exploration of the stroke and its gesture, and he refined this almost to its antithesis, exploring the straight line. The straight line removes his gesture, and personality, from the mark. The repeating and layering of nondescript straight lines, a practice that consciously evokes Tibetan mandala making, creates a meditative process, a sensation that can also be invoked in the viewer. The element of meditation and the emphasis on the process opens Joan to what he calls "the role of his subconscious" in his creative process. He works within a process that is highly structured, but the structure exists to facilitate a form of improvisation, a way of exploring unpredictable elements of his unconscious, therefore allowing him to reach a purer form of expressionism.





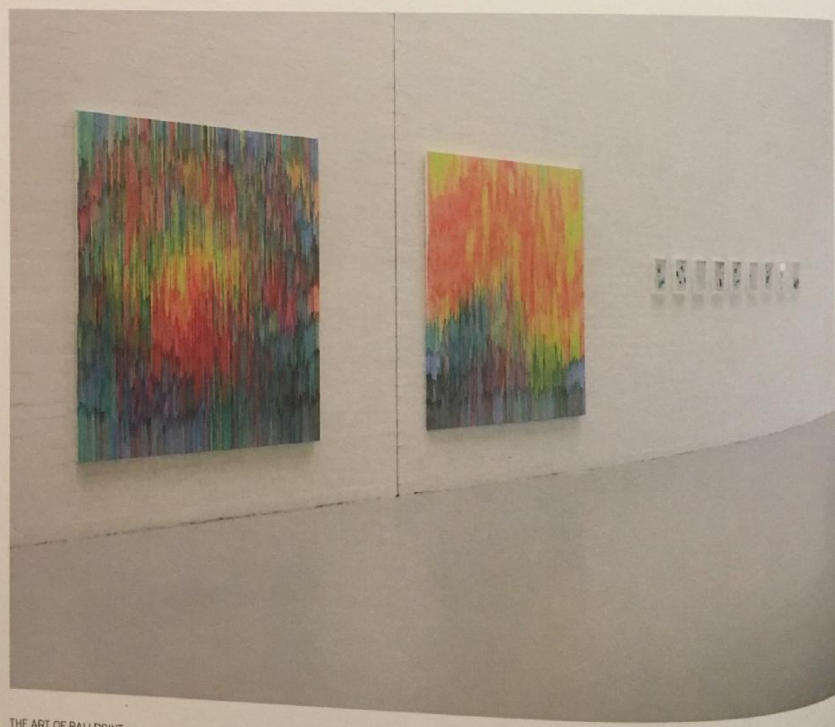
## BALLPOINT REFLECTIONS

Joan's materials are as spare as his process. He uses ballpoint pens (in a variety of colors) on primed cotton canvas. The historic connotation of canvas is its association with oil paints, a medium that is considered to elevate its subject (to the point of being criticized as a bourgeois and elitist—even, in some cases, Fascist—medium!). In a classical context, subjects were typically upper class, associated with wealth, religion, and royalty. To paint a subject in oil was to elevate it to the highest medium, the most sophisticated way of interpreting it.

In contrast, ballpoint pen is a mundane object. It is the essence of utilitarianism. Joan's choice to use ballpoint pen contrasts with the choice to draw on canvas. It is a means, much like his overall system of drawing, by which he strips out any superfluous marks, anything decadent, ornate, or purely decorative. It's a tool he uses to get at the core of his expression, creating starkness while allowing vibrancy and boldness.

*Untitled,  
detail, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on  
canvas  
79 x 79 inches  
(200 x 200 cm)*

Mondrian at M&T,  
exhibition view,  
2010-11  
Ballpoint pen on  
canvas





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What may otherwise be subtle shifts of color and composition become significant and deliberate distinctions, and the subtleties of the pieces become delicate and unique and much more important.

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## ART IN CONTEXT

As stated previously, Joan's drawing system relies on a set of self-determined rules to mitigate his artistic expression. Minimalist artists such as Sol LeWitt, Ellsworth Kelly, and Barnett Newman employed drawing systems during the 1960s as a reaction to the raw expression used by the previous generation of painters, the Abstract Expressionists. These practices were devised to take the ego out of art and leave the pure intention of the artist. Joan's system establishes clear tools (primed cotton canvas, ballpoint pens of varying colors) and the type of mark (a vertical line running parallel to the vertical edge of the canvas, with the line width determined by the width of the pen). The colors are determined beforehand, as well as the composition. The lightest colors are applied first, and then the darker colors are layered on top, so the darkest areas have the most ink and the lightest have the least. Every piece he does follows these rules.

Knowing these rules helps the viewer understand the drawings better, as the first experience viewing them may be in noting the similarity of the works. Once the system becomes evident, however, the similarities of the pieces become less relevant, and the decisions regarding composition and color arrangements that distinguish each piece become apparent. These choices keep each body of work unique, and each piece distinct. With the range of choices to be made within each piece so limited, what may otherwise be subtle shifts of color and composition become significant and deliberate distinctions, and the subtleties of the pieces become delicate and unique and much more important.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# SHANE McADAMS

SHANE'S PAINTINGS CAPTURE A BALANCE BETWEEN REALISTIC DEPICTIONS OF LANDSCAPES COMBINED WITH PROCESS-BASED ABSTRACTIONS, THOUGH THE ABSTRACTIONS THEMSELVES SEEM TO IMPLY A SPACE SIMILAR TO A LANDSCAPE.



Opposite:  
Pen blow 06, 2011  
Ballpoint pen and  
resin on panel  
12 x 12 inches  
(30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Below:  
Pen blow 08, 2011  
Ballpoint pen and  
resin on panel  
12 x 12 inches  
(30.5 x 30.5 cm)



Not simply recreating nature or capturing it illusionistically, Shane feels his process, his experimentation with the materials, is designed to reveal a chemical nature within the medium. His different processes are related to the way nature and time sculpt the actual landscape, like wind and water carving out mountains, water and oxygen oxidizing copper, insects chiseling wood, and so on—nature creating its own "sculpture" or "painting." Shane's explorations are meant to exploit the nature of his materials in a similar way.

The balance between Shane's paintings of landscapes and abstractions originally began by his painting back into the abstract work as a conceptual/painterly pun. There was a certain poetry about a really quick event, like the blowing of pen ink across a surface, and merging it with a painting that took twenty-eight hours. It also reinforced the metaphor about nature and time—how the incremental processes of nature belittles the petty attempts by the human hand to capture it. In the drawing *Hot Air* (page 44), for example, ballpoint is used in a traditional sense to realistically render the mountains, and the drawing was layered on top of a background wash of ballpoint pen ink and resin.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: MATERIALS AND EXPERIMENTATION

Shane's interest is in nontraditional industrial media that can be broken down and treated in unconventional ways. He's used epoxy resin, Sharpies, white-out, old sweaters, Elmer's glue, expanded polystyrene, and an assortment of other tools.

Shane experiments with materials, trying to find the moments where the materials reveal a natural structural tendency. He looks for the secondary qualities of a specific medium—not the intended use, but a hidden inherent property. He would never draw with a Sharpie or use Elmer's glue as adhesive. With industrial materials the discoveries are amplified because they have very specific practical designations and because what is found is a reflection of a natural fingerprint, which can seem contradictory in something mass-produced, purchased off the shelves of an office supply chain.

"It is messy and somewhat arbitrary," Shane says. "It's a little ecstatic and very right-brained. The reworking is a little more contained, conceptual, and analytical, or left-brained. I like the chocolate/peanut butter aspect to my practice as it allows me to exercise very different parts of my consciousness."



"I want to make fluorescent Sharpie markers reveal the logic of nature at the same time that I reveal the artificiality of an oil painting of the Grand Canyon. I think what I'm unlocking in them is somehow both dumber and more elegant than their conventional uses."



*Cloudsinger*, 2014  
Ballpoint pens, oil  
and resin on panel  
48 x 48 inches  
(122 x 122 cm)

"Sketching is ecstatic and exhilarating  
and messy and frustrating. It's the  
foundation to what I do and what I  
enjoy most."



## BALLPOINT REFLECTIONS

Shane played with ballpoint over about a two-year period and developed several processes for using the ink in unique ways. He wanted first to appraise its properties. He began by collecting a few ounces of ballpoint ink. At first, he tried atomizing it, which produces fibrous strands rather than a mist. He tried pouring hot resin over it, producing streaky emulsion patterns. Ballpoint ink is a viscous polymer that when blown on can't vaporize, so it ends up forming a web-like pattern of fine lines.

"I don't like to completely tip my hand and tell how things are made," Shane says, "as I think the strange opacity is part of the beauty of the practice. With my abstract work, I try to create structures whose complexity belies the simplicity of how they were made, so if anyone wants to figure it out, look to clarity and simplicity. It's about exploding the idea of a convention like 'painting' or 'nature' so that we may see it from every angle."

Shane refers to his sketching process as material experiments. He thinks in terms of actions and the material. His compositions are a by-product of the action's effect on the material. When he makes notes about ideas for new pieces, he only writes in nouns and verbs: "Two pieces of Tyvek. Two ink ice cubes. Spin." He considers the composition in the preparation, but has little control over the result.



Opposite:  
Suspended  
Landscape II, 2014  
Ballpoint pen and  
resin on panel  
12 x 12 x 3 inches  
(30 x 30 x 8 cm)

Above:  
Pen Glow 64, 2013  
Ballpoint pen and  
resin on panel  
12 x 12 inches  
(30 x 30 cm)

EXERCISE:

# CREATING AN EVEN FIELD OF MARKS

TO CREATE A FIELD OF MARKS (NOT A REPEATING PATTERN SO MUCH AS A CLOUD), FIRST DECIDE ON A TYPE OF MARK. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE MARKS ARE SMALL DASHES AND LONG STROKES.

With either of these marks, start by creating a small cluster, not too dense, and far enough apart to be able to fill more of the marks in between the initial ones applied. This is a microcosm of the rest to the field.

Expand further out from here. Do not work or linger too long on any area; move around the page so that the marks are being applied evenly. Loosely expand the marks to the edge of the areas that make up the field.

At this point, the area of the field should be defined, but the interior will look like little islands of marks with open spaces in between them. The islands of marks should be somewhat evenly spaced. The rest of the process is like a game, and the goal of the game is to fill in the empty spaces, but again, not lingering in one area too long, or else the field will be uneven. Move briskly around the page, filling in the empty spaces.

It helps to squint at the field. Squinting will blur the marks into a foggy tone and reveal where the largest open areas remain. The idea is to always move to the most open area and fill it with marks until it is even with the rest of the tone and then move on to the next most open area. Slowly, the fields will look less like isolated islands and will congeal together into an even tone. As the spaces in between each cluster grow smaller, the clusters of marks filled in between these spaces should also grow smaller, until it is only one mark at a time that is being applied.

Always looking for the lightest area to add marks, continue to fill the gaps until the field is as dark as desired.





EXERCISE:

# SCRIBBLE

THE IDEA OF THIS ASSIGNMENT IS NOT TO THINK, BUT DRAW. LET THE MOTION OF THE WRIST CREATE THE MARKS IN A FREE-FLOWING MANNER. THIS FIRST STEP IS MEANT TO FACILITATE THE MIND FRAME TO NOT BE AFRAID OF MAKING A "BAD DRAWING." IT FREES THE ARTIST OF THE IDEA THAT A DRAWING IS A "PRECIOUS" THING, AND ALLOWING THE MARK TO LEAD THE DRAWING, AND THE MOTION OF THE WRIST OR ARM TO CONTROL THE MARK, ACCOMPLISHES THIS.



Once the initial scribble is down, a type of mark will be evident; a texture or a feeling from the mark will become obvious and will become the basis for the rest of the drawing.



Begin to build the drawing up following the initial marks and begin to look for a form. This does not need to be a three-dimensional form, but more a point of interest.



The drawing may become a bit of a mess, so once this point is reached, try to define the parts of interest with more clarity. Refine and define these parts. Do not be afraid of overdrawing, as this is really just a sketch.



This drawing should be pushed further than is comfortable. If the drawing looks finished, continue to work. Go beyond what is comfortable, or "pretty"; this will possibly ruin the drawing, but it will also help reveal new possibilities. It will also stretch the concept of what "done" means in a drawing and allow for more confidence in subsequent drawings.



This is a practice that should be repeated multiple times, and quickly without thinking too much about it. Try it at least four times in one sitting. By the last drawing, there will be a certain abandon in the process, a looseness and confidence, as any anxiety about messing up the drawing will be overcome. This looseness is not something applied only to abstract scribbles in a sketchbook, but also helps in representational drawing and drawing from life. It will do two things: help with understanding how far a drawing can go before it is overworked and alleviate the fear of mark making. This is particularly useful with ballpoint because it cannot be erased, and the marks laid out on the page are permanent.



EXERCISE:

# RESPONDING TO AN ORGANIC PROCESS

THE OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO CREATE A NATURAL PROCESS, TO USE A MEDIUM IN A WAY THAT IS NOT TYPICAL DRAWING, BUT A DRAWING THAT IS DICTATED BY THE NATURE OF THE MEDIUM (IN THIS CASE, FROZEN WATERCOLOR). THE PROCESS IS ORGANIC AND WILL CREATE A NATURAL AND UNPLANNED COMPOSITION THAT RELATES TO THE NATURE OF THE MATERIAL. THIS IS MEANT TO TAKE THE CONTROL OF THE COMPOSITION OUT OF THE ARTIST'S HANDS, FORCING A RESPONSE TO THE PROCESS. LOSS OF CONTROL IS A KEY ELEMENT TO THIS EXERCISE.

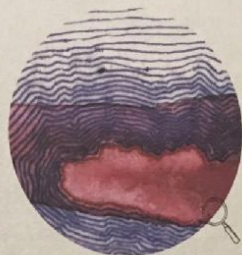


In this particular process, the goal is to create a stain out of a watercolor wash. The stain is the outcome of frozen watercolor thawing on a piece of paper.

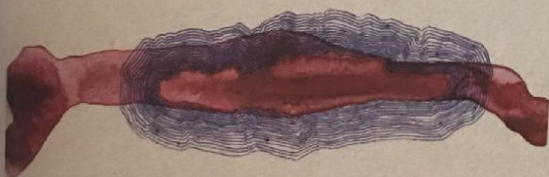
Mix watercolor, put it in an ice cube tray, and freeze it. Place the frozen ice cube on a sheet of paper; as the ice melts, the pigment spreads across the page. The wetness will cause the paper to buckle and warp, channeling the paint according to the bending of the paper. This creates a natural mark, something like a wash or brushstroke,

but not created by a human hand. The process of thawing allows the watercolor to create its own lines, seen as ripples within the shape of the wash. These are like layers of a wash created by an artist, but the intention is random and without purpose.

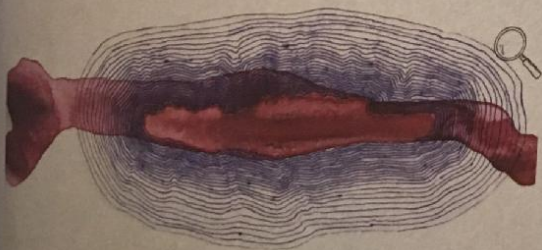




Once the wash dries, the organic layers of paint left behind create a sort of drawing, where lines are visible. These "lines" become the basis for the rest of the drawing. The process here is to find these lines and continue them. In this case, ballpoint is used to trace these lines and continue the act of rippling outward, mimicking the natural process. That is the only intent: simply continue to repeat and expand the "drawing" left by the ice.



These new lines created by the artist will inevitably take on a life of their own. Use the lines of the watercolor as the basis but allow the new drawn lines to evolve as well. The process here should be to simply repeat in a meditative act the lines in a concentric circle from the wash and allow the ballpoint lines to evolve, mirroring the nature of melted paint, but also reflecting the hand of the artist.



By leaving the rules simple, the drawing of the artist itself reflects the natural process of transformation of ice into water. The lines will evolve from a random state created by nature into an organized state created by a human. This reflects the act of order dissolving into random chaos and then back again into a controlled order.



## CHAPTER 4: ILLUSTRATION AND DESIGN

These artists use ballpoint pen as part of a commercial project, an ad campaign, a comic book, or a magazine article. The styles and techniques vary widely from artist to artist, but the commonality is how the ballpoint pen is used as a graphic tool: its fixed line weight and consistent line quality make for an easily reproducible (mass-produced) format. We also explore the creative process of the designer because the focus of the drawing can be much more abstract, dealing with patterns and design elements rather than drafting and rendering of form. The unique quality of the ballpoint pen allows it to be both delicate and bold, but always a tool of precision and clarity, properties that are best highlighted by the artists in this chapter.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# JIM RUGG

JIM REFERENCES A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS, WHICH ON THE SURFACE SEEM FAIRLY UNRELATED, YET CHANNELING THEM ALL THROUGH BALLPOINT PEN INTO A NOTEBOOK HAS A UNIFYING EFFECT, GIVING THE SENSE OF A SINGLE PERSPECTIVE. CONNOTATIONS OF CHILDHOOD FROM THE CONTEXT OF THE NOTEBOOK TIE IN NICELY WITH THE THEME OF THE IMAGES: VIDEO GAMES, SUPERHERO MOVIES, AND ANIMALS. THESE DRAWINGS ARE MASTERFULLY EXECUTED, BUT WITH THE TASTE OF A KID GROWING UP IN THE LATE 1980S.







**Opposite:**  
Abe Sapien, 2013  
Pen and notebook  
18 x 10½ inches  
(46 x 27 cm)

**Above:**  
Gothic Blood, 2014  
Pen and notebook  
16 x 10½ inches  
(40 x 27 cm)

## A THEME OF SHARED CULTURE

When Jim started making these drawings, he felt a strong sense of *déjà vu* for his school days, when he spent seventeen years staring at notebook paper every single day. He used to draw in notebooks and with cheap tools like ballpoint pens his entire childhood, every day, for twelve years. Once he went to college, his process and the tools completely changed after he discovered Photoshop.

After fifteen or twenty years of not drawing with ballpoint in notepads, he tried it again and it was like time traveling. A connection was made to what he drew as a teenager sitting in class, bored as hell and thinking about movies, video stores, comics, and girls—anything but math or history. Thus, the subject matter of his

drawings tends to reference 1980s and 90s pop culture. The drawings themselves perpetuated his interest in that time period, like a feedback loop. Jim's nostalgia is a shared nostalgia. It's something people relate to when they see his work. The more drawings he makes, the more the subject matter expands. But that sense of nostalgia, pop culture, and high school cool definitely informs the work.

"That time period, right before the Internet takes off and changed the world, that time period is the last moment of pop culture," says Jim. "After that, we move to greater and greater specialization. Pop culture now is subdivided into so many pieces that there's no major overlap. I taught a three-week workshop at Carnegie Mellon last year. The class was made up of eighteen- to twenty-year-old art majors.

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"We have so many choices now that we can sit next to someone on the bus and have zero pop cultural overlap. My drawings are influenced by the last days of shared pop culture, which, in hindsight, was my childhood."

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One day, we spent twenty minutes in a class discussion trying to figure out a book or movie or some common pop cultural experience. More than half of them were familiar with *Lord of the Rings*: they had read or seen a part of one installment. *Harry Potter* was close to half. We could not find one example of a movie or book that the entire class had seen or read."

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: MATERIALS AND PROCESS

The ballpoint drawings Jim creates are done on very cheap notepads, the kind typically used by elementary and high school students, or photocopy and printer paper. When Jim started his notebook drawings, he first experimented on a number of higher quality papers, but found most of them were too fibrous, causing the pen to become clogged, which led Jim to use traditional notebooks. Notebooks and ballpoint pens are the cheapest drawing materials available. Jim has spent the last few years experimenting with different pens to find his favorite. The ones he uses the most now are the BIC 4-Color Retractable Pen, fine tip with an orange barrel, and the BIC 4-Color Fashion Colors Pen, medium tip (which has the colors pink, light blue, purple, and light

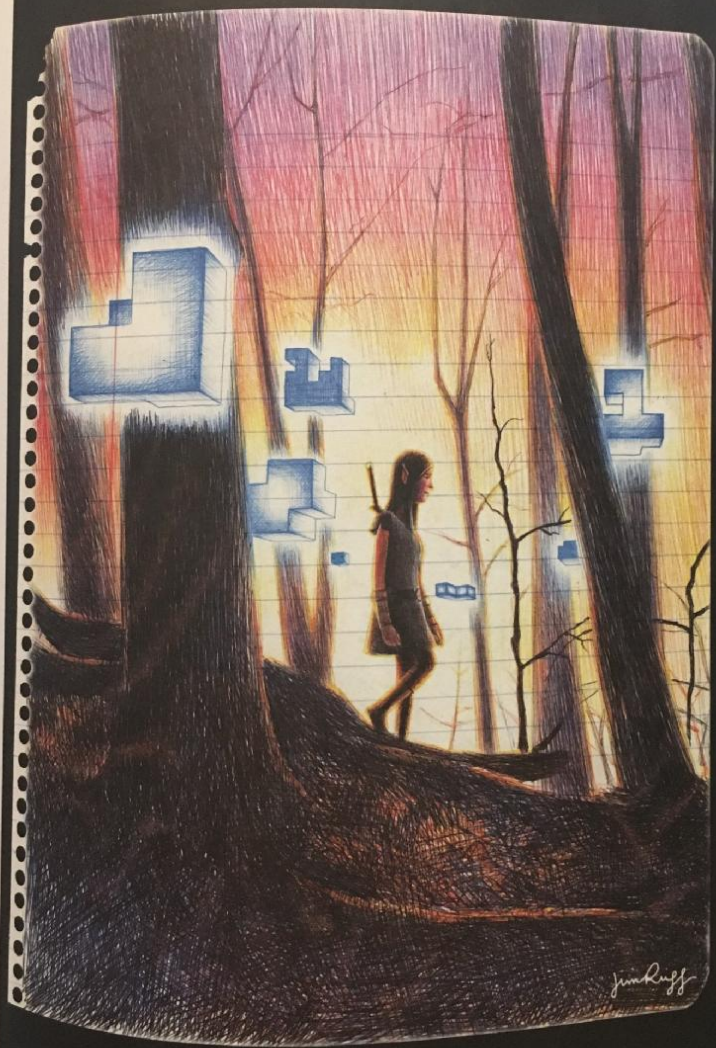
green). He usually buys them at the Rite Aid in the Pittsburgh airport.

Jim's drawings involve the layering of ballpoint pen, which creates an effect similar to the blending of paint. Jim tends to start with a light color to develop the composition. First, he'll sketch the subject matter separately. Then he transfers that sketch, either by referencing it by eye or lightly tracing parts of it. This first part of the drawing is done with a light color.

Once the image is lightly drawn, Jim will start to build up value. This can be done with one color or multiple colors. Skin, for example, is usually composed of a number of colors. The ballpoint pen line is so thin that colors can be composed by hatching. The ink is light enough that new colors show through the translucent properties of the layered ink.

Layering too much ink will make it opaque, though, and the ink will get very dark very quickly, regardless of whether the color is a light one (blending light colors won't prevent the ink from becoming surprisingly dark). Once there are a few layers of ink, the dark value is hard to avoid. So thinking in terms of value is helpful in avoiding the buildup of too much ink.

Dorner, 2011  
Pencil and notebook  
18 x 102 inches  
(46 x 27 cm)







Jim Kuyf



## NOTEBOOKS VS. SKETCHBOOKS

Jim's notebook drawings are final pieces of artwork, complete drawings. He thinks of the notebooks as finished works, like art books more than sketchbooks. They are an extension of Jim's interest in zine making. People often describe his drawings as "crazy" and "insane," mostly as a reaction to the methodical detail. Making these drawings is somewhat meditative for him. It's a vastly different process than working in InDesign or Photoshop or making comics (the processes that Jim uses in his other work). The ballpoint work is a unique process that he doesn't have an outlet for in his comics and other work. It's about the balance between restraint and rendering; it means constantly staring at the drawing for hours while rendering it.

The notebook and the composition paper are a significant part of the presentation. For fans of Jim's drawings, people who like the notebooks, the presentation of the work in the notebook is part of the attraction. People respond to the materials strongly. Nostalgia is a factor, but also anyone who grew up when Jim did can relate to not only the subjects but also the action of drawing: doodling in a book like this, the feel of the pen, and the way ballpoint interacts with the paper. It is an extremely common drawing experience to spend ten to fifteen years staring at notebook paper. Everyone knows what a ballpoint pen is like. They instantly understand what they're seeing.

The paper in Jim's notebooks is delicate. It warps. It's easy to rip, and a lot of drawing can cut through the paper, a quality Jim has



Opposite:  
Divine Wonder Woman, 2011  
Pen and notebook  
8 1/2 x 11 inches  
(21.5 x 28 cm)

Left:  
Mud Catlog, 2011  
Pen and notebook  
8 1/2 x 11 inches  
(21.5 x 28 cm)

taken advantage of in some of his drawings, having once made a *Ghostbusters* drawing that included a *Ghostbuster's* embroidered patch. For that patch, Jim glued a number of sheets of paper together, then "cut it out" by tracing around the patch with a pen. The result was a texture that resembled an actual embroidered patch.

From time to time, Jim finds or is given an older notebook, which seems to have a higher quality paper, and often there is a yellow patina from aging, which he likes. There is no particular brand that is preferable that is made now, despite many different brands on the market; usually, it is just the cover that is different, but the paper is always the same.

Jim doesn't consider the notebook drawings to be the same as sketchbooks. His sketchbooks are much looser, far more sloppy and full of mistakes, and ironically, contain a lot of notes. He has sketchbooks to write and draw in. Some are notebooks. These things contain lists, notes, sketches, page roughs, barely formed ideas, and more. They are journals and sources of scrap paper and occasionally contain drawings.

"It is an extremely common drawing experience to spend ten to fifteen years staring at notebook paper. Everyone knows what a ballpoint pen is like."

FEATURED ARTIST:

# CARINE BRANCOWITZ

CARINE BRANCOWITZ CREATES DRAWINGS OF FASHIONABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN IMAGINARY DREAMSCAPES; HER CLEAN, STARK STYLE OF DRAWING BRINGS TO LIFE A SHARP, IDEAL WORLD. FIGURES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTS ARE INTERPRETED THROUGH CLEAR DELINEATIONS OF LINE AND PATTERN, HAIRSTYLES, CLOTHING, AND ARCHITECTURAL AND FLORAL ABSTRACTIONS PRESENTED IN BOLD SIMPLICITY. HER IMAGERY COMBINES A SNAPSHOT SENSE OF INTIMACY IN HER SUBJECTS, WITH A FASHION ILLUSTRATOR'S SENSIBILITY TOWARD THE DETAILS AND PARTICULARS OF CLOTHING AND HAIRSTYLES. THE FIGURES, ARCHITECTURE, AND PLANTS HAVE THE SIMPLICITY, CLARITY, AND IDEALISM OF AN ATHENIAN VASE OR OF GREEK AND ROMAN SCULPTURE.



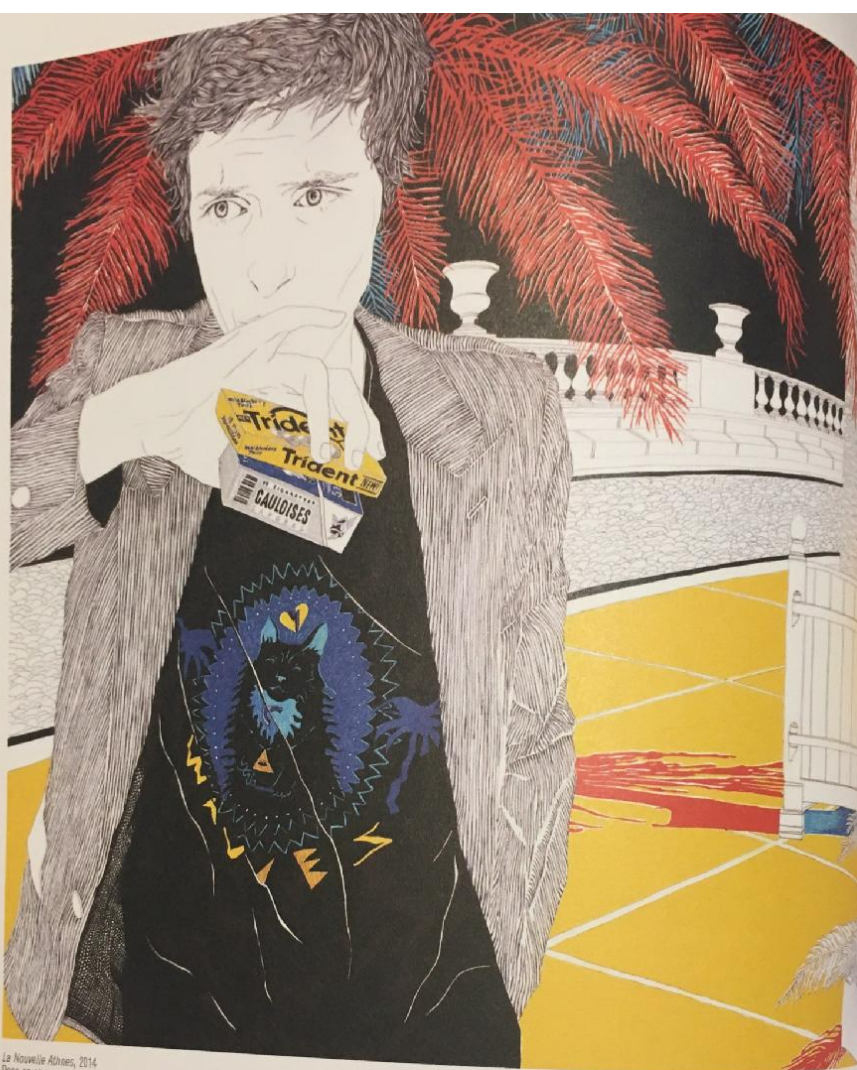
Carine became interested in drawing at a young age. Her mother was an artist, and there were always sketchbooks and pencils around. She attended the École Estienne art school in Paris and started her career in 1996 as junior art director for a communications agency specializing in fashion. Her work with ballpoint started in 2007. Her subjects reflect life around her, boys and girls mostly, and they inhabit dream realities; she sees the places in her dreams and recreates them. She carries a camera and takes pictures to work from later. Carine likes drawing people and modernist architecture and likes mixing it with ancient structures and Greek and Roman sculptures.

Opposite:  
Medusa, 2010  
Pens on paper  
47 x 31 inches  
(120 x 80 cm)

Below:  
Antinouspolis, 2014  
Pens on paper  
47 x 31 inches  
(120 x 80 cm)








Le Nouvelier Alchimie, 2014  
Peinture sur papier  
47 x 31 inches  
(120 x 80 cm)





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She embraces the pen's limitations;  
not being able to correct the drawing  
creates a tension of being always close  
to failure.

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## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: PROCESS AND PLANNING

The images, ideas, and process in Carine's artwork come naturally to her; it's an organic process where she doesn't question herself. A drawing starts from an image in her head, a precise moment that she tries to get out on paper. The process of drawing is an unconscious act, with her hand doing one thing and her mind doing a hundred other things, and it creates for her a kind of trance.

Preparing for a drawing can take weeks. She labors over the planning, creating a delicate balance of elements, breaking down where to focus on details, and which color or colors to use. Moving something breaks the balance, and the composition needs to be reworked.

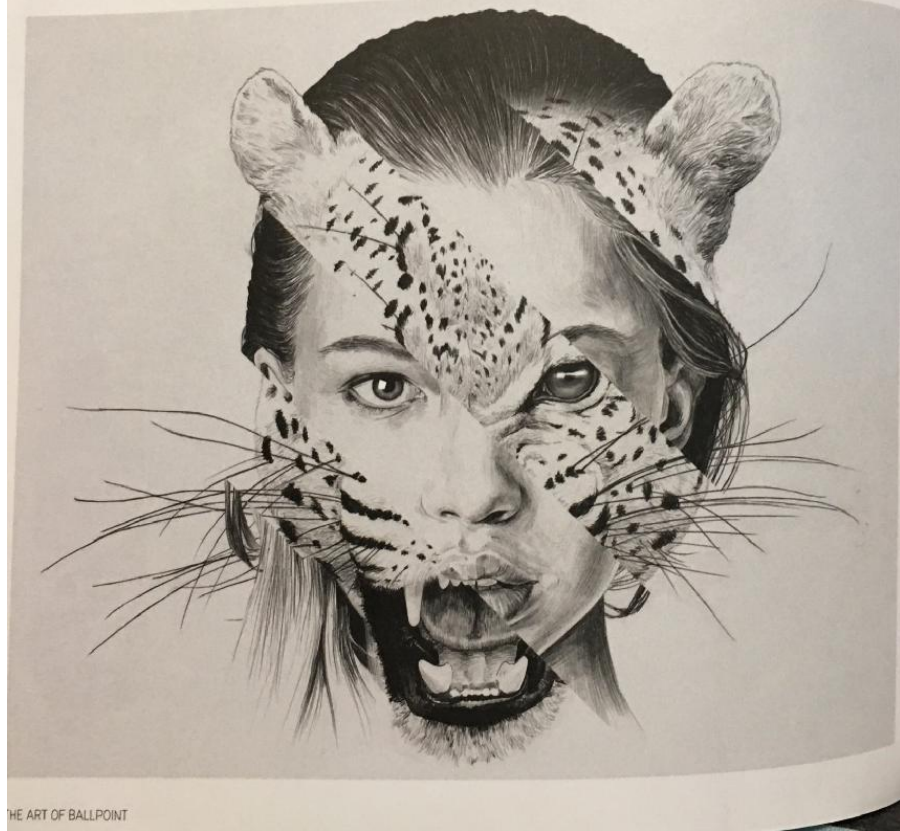
She uses Photoshop to compose her work, collaging together photo sketches, colors, and patterns to see what looks good. It can sometimes take up to a month to finish a piece.

Carine works mostly in ballpoint because of the restrained situation the pen creates. She embraces the pen's limitations; not being able to correct the drawing creates a tension of being always close to failure. Carine also uses other media, such as felt-tip pens, pencils, acrylic, and China ink, depending on the drawing and her inspirations for the drawing. She creates original work for exhibition and also works as an illustrator with commissions and editorials for clients including Nokia, DC Comics, Converse, *Nylon*, *Marie Claire*, and *Playboy*.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# CHAMO SAN

CHAMO SAN IS AN ILLUSTRATOR FROM BARCELONA; HIS WORK COMBINES KNOWLEDGE OF CLASSICAL FIGURE DRAWING WITH A LOVE OF MODERN ABSTRACTION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN. HE USES BALLPOINT PEN IN A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES, INCLUDING SOFT CROSSHATCHING, PHOTO REALISTIC TONAL DRAWING, AND FLAT GRAPHIC SHAPES. IN HIGH SCHOOL, HE WOULD DRAW ALL OVER HIS BOOKS AND ANYTHING HE HAD WITH A BALLPOINT PEN, FILLING EVERYTHING WITH DRAWINGS. HE DEVELOPED AN INTEREST IN FIGURE DRAWING AND CHOSE TO STUDY FINE ARTS. ENTERING BARCELONA UNIVERSITY HOPING FOR AN EDUCATION IN TECHNIQUE, AND THE CHANCE TO EXPLORE NEW MATERIALS, HE WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE EXPERIENCE. HE LATER STUDIED FOR A YEAR IN PARIS, WHERE HE RECEIVED BETTER INSTRUCTION IN FIGURE DRAWING. AFTER FINISHING, HE BEGAN TO COMBINE HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIGURE WITH BALLPOINT TECHNIQUES HE REMEMBERED FROM HIGH SCHOOL, WHICH LED TO A STYLE STEEPED IN DETAIL AND REFINEMENT.



Opposite:  
Gafara II, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on  
paper  
12 x 12 inches  
(30.5 x 30.5 cm)

Below:  
Mesa, 2012  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
12 x 12 inches  
(30.5 x 30.5 cm)



"I love to draw volume, and the figure is amazing to draw. You have soft and hard zones just side by side and you have to explain it on paper. I enjoy doing it, especially when you can draw your girlfriend. It's like making love while working."



## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: REALITY AND ABSTRACTION

Chamo's skill lies in his ability to draw realistically, but not being interested in simply copying reality, he looks for an intersection of reality and abstraction, specifically an abstraction influenced by contemporary graphic design. Chamo's drawing style has a certain classical feel in how he describes the form; line is used similarly to what might be found in classical etchings, but there is a quality that is also photographic, where form is not described with crosshatching alone, but also through the building up of tonal relationships using a variety of marks.

Images such as *Messi* have a photorealism. Often these two approaches to drawing, the classical linear style and the more modern tonal style, appear in the same image. The female nude was what Chamo worked on every day while studying fine arts, only he used other techniques than what he uses now. He began using these figure drawing experiences as a way to experiment with different ways of describing the figure, thinking of it as exploring new languages.

This thinking can be seen in the drawing *Anne*. He uses classical hatching to draw the body, the hair resembles a photograph, and the shirt is described in sharp graphic contrast, only shapes, reminiscent of '60s op art, where the negative space and the absence of line leaves the viewer to



complete the drawing in his or her mind. This intersection of classic and modern is an idea that affects both Chamo's technique and his ideas.

Chamo considers himself primarily an illustrator, though he also creates personal work for galleries. When he works for someone else and the work is not a project of his own creation, he considers the work illustration and he considers himself an illustrator. His illustration is influenced by graphic design as much as by classical work, and he borrows ideas from both worlds to use in his illustration.

The drawing *Messi* is an example of such a project. The concept integrates realism and graphic abstraction, and the portrait is inside the logo of the Barcelona Football Club. The logo is reduced to the shapes that the portrait is broken up into, so the logo, like the portrait, is recognizable, and yet composed in an unfamiliar context.

Chamo's work has been commissioned by companies including Nike, Heineken, Nokia, Mini, Banc Sabadell, Anad Kupuri, *GQ Italy*, and for the San Jordi Celebration in his hometown of Barcelona.

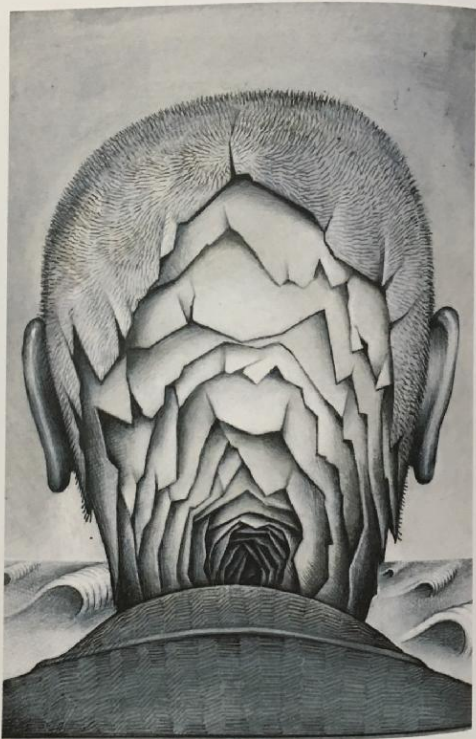
Opposite: <i>Fueras</i> , 2015 Ballpoint pen on paper 11.8 x 17.8 inches (30 x 45 cm)	Below: <i>Papel</i> , 2015 Ballpoint pen on paper 11.8 x 11.8 inches (30 x 30 cm)
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FEATURED ARTIST:

# JOO CHUNG

JOO CHUNG WORKED AS AN ILLUSTRATOR FOR SEVERAL DECADES AND HAS TAUGHT DRAWING AT THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS IN NEW YORK FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS. FOR HIS PROFESSIONAL WORK, JOO TYPICALLY RELIED ON PAINTING, BUT FOR HIS PERSONAL AND SKETCHBOOK WORK, HE USES PRIMARILY BALLPOINT PEN. THE PEN IS ATTRACTIVE FOR TWO REASONS. THE FIRST IS ITS CONVENIENCE AND AVAILABILITY. THE OTHER IS THAT IT DOES NOT NEED SHARPENING OR REFILLING. AFTER YEARS OF USING A PEN THAT NEEDED TO BE DIPPED EVERY SO MANY MINUTES, JOO FOUND THE PAUSE NEEDED TO DIP HIS PEN TO BE DISTRACTING, AND HE BEGAN TO FAVOR THE CONSISTENCY OF BALLPOINT. NOT HAVING TO PAUSE DURING HIS DRAWING LEFT HIM MORE IN TUNE WITH HIS PROCESS, ALLOWING HIM TO BECOME LOST IN HIS WORK.



Joo's drawing is realistic in the way it describes space and volume, though he does not consider himself a realist, but something more like an illusionist. He uses a classical academic method to bring images from the imagination; these techniques only serve to illuminate his imagination. The subject is the central focus, so in a way, the process that creates the image needs to be somewhat invisible, or not distracting from the subject.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: CLASSICAL ILLUSIONISM

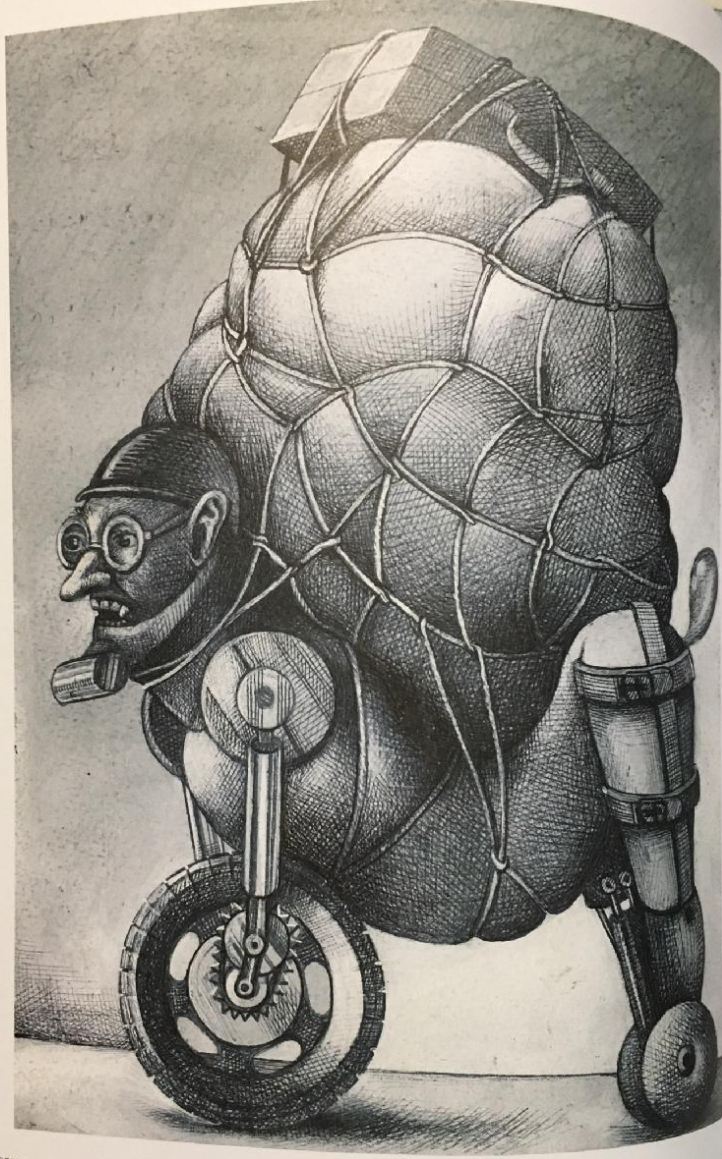
Joo's technique is derived, if not inspired by, the work mostly of pre-Caravaggio European draftsmen. Caravaggio represented a change in thinking about light, shadow, and line in image making; his work marked a shift in observation that is more similar to the way a camera observes light and so was a shift toward the modern. Drawing before this time, as in the thinking that stemmed from an artist like Botticelli or Bellini, was a style derived from natural observation but that relied more on line rather than light to interpret both life and imagination.

Joo's interest in classical western European artists is not one of imitation, but more a reinvention of these techniques to serve his own ideas; the purpose is not to look like Brueghel or Da Vinci, just to understand how they created an illusion. He looks to their example for answers to simple questions, such as how is a round object drawn to look voluminous, and how is reality imitated? This is how he learned to create his own imaginary world. Artists that he looks to for insight on illusionistic, or imaginary, drawing include Da Vinci, Botticelli, Brueghel, Dürer, and Hans Bellmer.



Opacities:  
*Unditled*, 2000  
Graphite, gesso,  
and ballpoint pen  
7 x 10 inches  
(18 x 25.5 cm)

Left:  
*Unditled*, 2000  
Graphite, gesso,  
and ballpoint pen  
7 x 10 inches  
(18 x 25.5 cm)





Opposite:  
Untitled, 2000  
Graphite, gesso,  
and ballpoint pen  
7 x 10 inches  
(18 x 25.5 cm)

Left:  
Untitled, 2000  
Graphite, gesso,  
and ballpoint pen  
7 x 10 inches  
(18 x 25.5 cm)

These examples of Joo's compositions constitute a body of work distinctly separate from what he did in his commercial work. These are a sort of emotional release and come from a time of transition. These drawings were done with no purpose in mind aside from the desire to reconnect with a younger self, to rediscover the act of drawing that he enjoyed in high school before he became a more serious artist. It is drawing for the pure enjoyment of it. The ideas are spontaneous, or at least somewhat improvised.

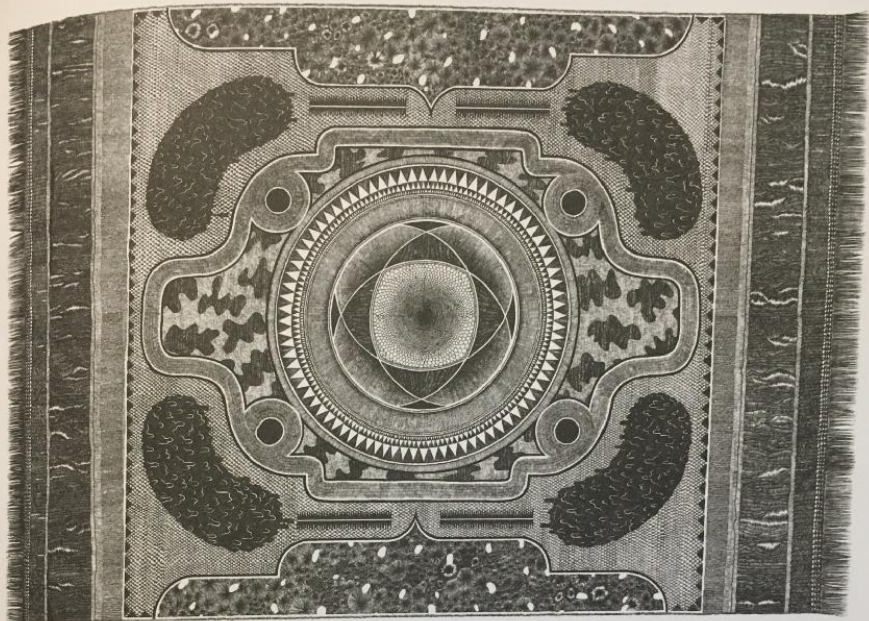
To begin a process like this, to start a drawing with nothing in mind, Joo had to come up with a method to overcome the awkwardness of the blank page. He starts by just making random marks, building what he calls a false sense of history. He builds up the marks and then gessoes over the marks, adding a tone to the page. Having a history, a rough surface, and a personality on the page allows Joo "permission" to move on and takes the fear out of the blank page.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# JONATHAN BRÉCHIGNAC

JONATHAN BRÉCHIGNAC'S WORK COMBINES ABSTRACTIONS AND DESIGN ELEMENTS FROM DISPARATE SOURCES: QUICK RESPONSE (QR) CODES, PLAYING CARD SUITES, ARABESQUES, AND SOUTHWESTERN AMERICAN INDIAN ART. TRANSLATING ALL OF THESE SYMBOLS AND INFORMATION THROUGH BALLPOINT HAS A UNIFYING EFFECT, ALLOWING OTHERWISE DISCONNECTED SYMBOLS AND DESIGN ELEMENTS TO FEEL NATURAL, AS THOUGH THEY BELONG TOGETHER.





The effort put into the detail is an act of meditation, which is then reflected in the interaction with the audience, as something this detailed demands time to look at and a certain amount of contemplation and meditation.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: MATERIALS AND INSPIRATION

Jon uses BIC pens because of their availability. He is partial to the idea of using something anyone can be familiar with. Everybody has doodled with a pen during a phone call, but Jon repeats his doodles for hours and on bigger sheets, pushing the limits of scale. He uses the most simplistic things to maximize results. A pen, a big sheet of paper, and time are the "tools" needed to make the drawings.

Opposite:  
*Carpet 6*, 2013  
Blue ballpoint,  
pencils, and UV ink  
on paper  
45 x 29 inches  
(115 x 73 cm)

Above:  
*Carpet 3*, 2012  
Black ballpoint and  
pencils on paper  
37 x 24 inches  
(94 x 61 cm)



Top left:  
Carpet 7, in progress,  
detail, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on  
paper  
43.5 x 27.6 inches  
(110 x 70 cm)

Top right:  
Carpet 4, detail, 2012  
Black ballpoint,  
pencils, and color  
pencils on paper  
44 x 27 inches  
(112 x 69 cm)

Bottom:  
Carpet 2, in progress,  
detail, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
43.5 x 27.6 inches  
(110 x 70 cm)





Jon is interested in patterns, geometric shapes, and fabric. It is well known that a part of Islamic art is nonfigurative and that its meaning is displayed through geometry. This inspired Jon to translate the format of his long-form doodles and patterns into Muslim praying carpets.

Jon works in the fields of graphic design (digital and editorial) and at the same time fine arts. He feels comfortable with being both: designer and artist. There is no real separation between the two in his work. Repeating patterns all day long with a pen is a good way to empty his mind and is like meditation, only more physical.

The subject of the carpet was at first a pretext for making large drawings on which Jon could work day after day, a desire that comes from a deep fascination with ancient art masters and craftspeople who could spend years or even their entire life on the same piece. Jon is interested in patterns, geometric shapes, and fabric.

It is well known that a part of Islamic art is nonfigurative and that its meaning is displayed through geometry. This inspired Jon to translate the format of his long-form doodles and patterns into Muslim praying carpets. Using the prayer rug as the basis, he began including a pastiche of motifs and design references from a mix of civilizations, especially those surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, creating work that questions the West's cultural relationship to the East.

For Jon, the carpet is a noble subject for his big drawings. The idea of a carpet being drawn, thread by thread, to the scale of a traditional prayer rug, assembled in ink on a sheet of paper, inverts the use of the carpet: it prevents anyone from ever actually being able to use it.

It is not Jon's intention to comment on religion, but only for his work to touch people, or at least for people to enjoy the result. But it is also good if in addition it can make the audience think about the possibilities of connections between cultures and the importance of "living together" in our globalizing world.

## DESIGN MOTIFS

The carpet is a combination of influences, but not a single or particular influence over any other. The carpet exists as a whole, tying all of the influences together, and the whole consists of the combination of all of the elements, a fusing of culture, but giving preference to none in particular.

Some of the specific elements included are the windows of Notre Dame, ostrich leather, sea urchin hide, and Oriental geometry. Some of the patterns come from French, Roman, Japanese, Native American, and Mexican motifs, military camouflage, and other animal hides. The QR codes lead to a website dedicated to the project, [www.thecarpet.net](http://www.thecarpet.net).





Carpet 4, 2012  
Black ballpoint, pencils,  
and color pencils on paper  
44 x 27 inches  
(112 x 69 cm)



EXERCISE:

# BLENDING COLOR



The way to achieve more complex colors is to layer them through crosshatching. The ink in ballpoint pens is fairly viscous, making it not very transparent, so layering in with dense marks won't blend new colors so much as quickly darken the drawing (there is not really any lightener in the form of ballpoint ink, except maybe in gel pens, so even though the colors are quite opaque, they darken as they layer). Crosshatching with light strokes creates a light, thin, and slightly transparent mark. Hatching a second color on top of the first—say, blue over yellow—creates the sense of green in the overlapping and blending of ink, as

with layering watercolor, but the sense of green is also created because in between the overlapping strokes is still visible pure versions of the yellow and blue. Up close, the colors are distinctly separate, but at a distance, the brightness of each color gives the impression of blending: like CMYK dots in a zoomed-in comic page, they separate into distinct colors, but at a distance, they blend together into a more complex and subtle palette. So when layering colors in ballpoint, it is important not to make heavy marks, but light, thin strokes.

When starting a color drawing, it may help to begin with a pencil sketch. The

BLENDING COLORS WITH BALLPOINT IS A PROCESS OF LAYERING BY WAY OF CROSSHATCHING THE COLORS OF THE PEN. THE COLORS THAT COME DIRECTLY FROM THE PEN TEND TO BE BOLD, AND THE SPECTRUM IS REPRESENTED MAINLY WITH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COLORS: RED, YELLOW, BLUE, GREEN, ORANGE, PURPLE, PINK, AND BROWN. THE BLUES, REDS, AND GREENS TEND TO HAVE LIGHTER AND DARKER VERSIONS THAT CAN BE USEFUL FOR SHADING, BUT THIS IS A LIMITED RANGE COMPARED WITH THE COLOR RANGE OF, SAY, A 500-COLOR PENCIL COLLECTION OR A 200-COLOR PASTEL SET.



reason for a pencil sketch, as opposed to a preliminary drawing in ballpoint, is that every color is very visible at the end, so each object should be outlined with the specific color it will be drawn with, and it can be difficult to switch between several colors while trying to focus on building a composition.

Once the initial color lines are laid down, the first layer of color can be blocked in. These colors should tend toward the brighter and warmer side of the final color. In this case, the red building is the warmest color in the image. The color is not the red of the pen, but a deeper, cooler red, verging on purple






in spots. The wall is in two main shades, a bright red on the left face of the building and a darker, cooler color on the right. The color on the left more closely resembles the red from the pen, so the first layer of color can be applied more boldly here. On the right, the same red will have to be layered with purple to cool it down and resemble the color from the image, so the red should be applied more lightly. There is less red on this side than on the opposite wall, so more of the white paper needs to be exposed to display the purple that will be added in the second layer. The sky gradates from a dark blue to a light. It's not just a tonal shift, but also a color shift,

from a purple blue to a slightly lighter more green blue. The colors don't need to be that specific, as the shift from a purple to a blue can be enough. The lighter of the two should be applied first.

The second layer of color will be darker and cooler. (It's easier to cool down warm colors than to warm up cool colors.) The pressure of the marks should be enough on this layer to make the form as dark as it needs to be. If the second pass of color does not make the surface dark enough, it's fine to work back and forth between the first color and the second one, building up the drawing until the balance of color and value

is correct. (The red in the right wall had to be worked back and forth between purple and red a number of times to get the rich tone, and the same with the two blues used in the sky, whereas the left red wall was finished with only two passes, as were the Dumpsters in the foreground.)

The last step is to add the darkest, coolest colors. This layer is built up slowly so as not to overwork the shadows and turn them into black abstract shapes. Seeing the detail underneath (as in the windows on the left wall) creates a better sense of space, and it places the shadow on a three-dimensional surface.



EXERCISE:

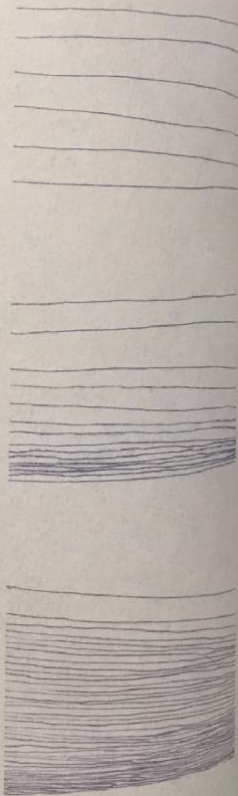
# GRADIENTS WITH MARKS

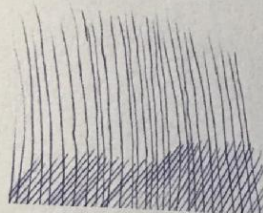
THE CONSTRAINED NATURE OF THE BALLPOINT PROHIBITS CERTAIN FLEXIBILITIES THAT ARE INHERENT IN MEDIA DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY AS DRAWING TOOLS. THE ARTISTIC NATURE OF THE BALLPOINT PEN IS SECONDARY TO ITS PRIMARY FUNCTION AS A TECHNICAL TOOL. THIS LIMITATION PREVENTS THINGS LIKE LINE FLEXIBILITY; HOWEVER, THIS IS OVERCOME BY BUILDING UP FIELDS OF MARKS THAT CAN CREATE A SOFT-EDGED FEEL. ACHIEVING THIS SOFTNESS IS IMPORTANT IN CREATING GRADATIONS.

A field of marks created by ballpoint can, from a distance, give the impression of blending and a cloudy, atmospheric feeling; however, on close inspection, the soft gradating effect is achieved with a careful, graphic precision. A soft edge is usually achieved by gradually diminishing the pattern of marks.

This exercise looks at ways of achieving this diminishing effect with different marks. The process is similar to creating a field of marks. Start with drawing the extent of the field—or in this case, the gradation—and broadly spread out the marks for the gradation, leaving plenty of room to add more of the same mark in between the initial marks.

In the first example, start with a series of parallel lines, vertical or horizontal. Leave wide spaces in between them (this can actually be done numerically). Start with six parallel lines. Between the first two lines, fill in six lines. Between the next two lines, fill in half as much, or three lines. Between the next two, fill in one. This model acts as a close-up of how to think about diminishing lines at an even pace. On a larger scale, this idea can be used to create a smoother, more gradual gradation.





Another example of this can be done with a series of vertical lines. This time, make the lines more tightly arranged, but still leave room for more lines in between. Begin to add a new line in between every existing line, but only make the line half as long as the first set, so there will be an initial set of lines, longer than the rest, and a second row in between the first, but half as long. Continue adding lines in between each of the previous lines, only half as long as the previous set.

A third way to think about this is to begin the same as the last example, with a series of vertical lines, and then add a second series of lines half as long as the first, only this time hatch them over the first series at a 45-degree angle. Add another series half the length of the second series, hatching in at a 45-degree angle but moving in the opposite direction.

EXERCISE:

# LINE SHAPE AND PATTERN

THE OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO DEAL WITH A DRAWING IN PURELY GRAPHIC INFORMATION USING ONLY FLAT LINE, PATTERN, AND SHAPE (AS OPPOSED TO USING LIGHT OR VALUE TO DEFINE FORM, AND STIPPLING OR HATCHING TO DESCRIBE GRADATION AND VALUE).



The subject must first be broken down graphically, which can be done by starting with a pencil drawing, though this is not necessary. In this drawing, any middle tone—that is, anything not a solid black shape or an outline—will be described by a graphic pattern (in the case of this image, parallel lines) that is flat and does not convey space.



First, identify how each shape will be treated: which ones will be outlines, solid shapes, or patterns. Next, draw the outline. All of the lines must be treated with an even weight. An even weight will abstract the line, making everything flat, understating the illusion of space, and bringing forward each element as an abstraction, calling attention to the abstraction instead of the illusion. In this particular example, the windows become as much an abstract pattern as the parallel lines used to describe the mid-tones.

Next, choose one of the other elements (solid shape or pattern) and fill it in everywhere it appears in the image. For instance, it may be best to first describe all of the solid shapes. Block in all of these to understand where the positive and negative areas will be. (This is easiest if you start with a pencil sketch of the composition.)





The parallel lines used to describe mid-tones could easily be replaced with another pattern. Here, parallel lines were chosen because they complement the vertical rise of the buildings. The pattern is laid out in a way to avoid gradation and the illusion of space, so each line is more or less evenly spaced to create a flat effect.

To create a sense of variety in the pattern, the areas of lines are varied from vertical to horizontal. A surface like the street stretches forward, so the lines are drawn in a horizontal pattern, to keep the van that is positioned next to the street from blending in with the street. The pattern of lines on the van is drawn vertically. The two surfaces are the same value, but distinctly separate objects.

The last step is to block in all of the darkest tones with solid, evenly rendered shapes, and all of these shapes must be completely filled in.

EXERCISE:

# GRAPHIC COLOR

THE VARIATIONS IN BALLPOINT COLOR ARE NOT AS EXTENSIVE AS A MEDIUM LIKE COLORED PENCIL, SO THE COLORS TEND TO BE PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND BOLD. EACH COLOR REPRESENTED IS IN A PURE FORM, UNLAYERED, AND THEREFORE UNBLENDED AND UNMUTED.




It's good to start with a pencil drawing to be certain of the composition, so you don't have to focus on the whole when dealing with the parts, though it is not necessary. A simple outline drawing is fine. The drawing should break down the composition into specific shapes—in this instance, the shirt, pants, face, floor, wall, and so on. The detail of each shape should be rendered in one

color only, no blending of other colors to enhance shadows. Even though the color of each object is distinct, the value of the entire piece needs to make sense together. In this example, the red shirt still needs to be darker than the purple wall. These value relationships are important for maintaining the compositional structure of the image.



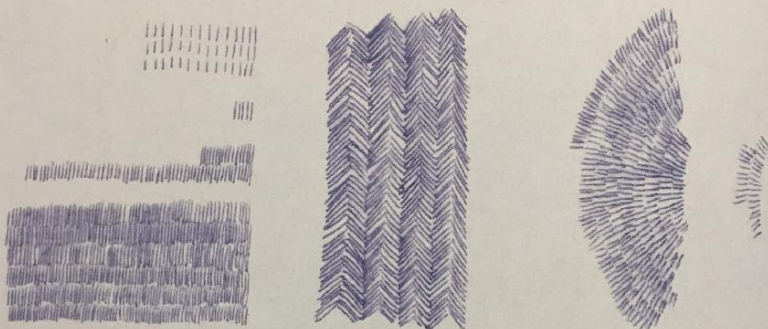
While breaking the image down into these basic elements, it is also interesting to consider the negative space by elements left out; for instance, consider leaving out the shirt, or the hair, or any combination of elements to see how much the image can be reduced and still be readable. While creating this drawing, consider what the basic elements the image needs are and what can be left out.



EXERCISE:

# REPETITIVE MARKS

A MARK CAN BE USED TO CREATE AN ENTIRE FIELD OF SHADING OR BE REPEATED TO FILL A SPACE. THE OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO EXPLORE VARIOUS WAYS TO USE MARKS TO CREATE PATTERNS AND REPETITIVE DESIGNS.



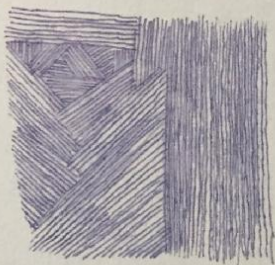
The easiest way to start is to create a single mark and then repeat it over and over to create a pattern out of it. Start with something simple and a simple set of rules. Use a short vertical dash. Create a row of this one mark and make sure the mark is repeated evenly and the row is a straight line.

Now begin a new row on top of the last, the same length and the same size mark. Continue to expand on this until the pattern begins to fill up the page. Be careful to keep the marks even so the pattern will be an even tone.

Next, take this mark and angle it at 45 degrees. Create a row of these marks. To make the pattern more interesting in the next row, create the mirror image of the mark, 45 degrees in the opposite direction, and begin to fill the page with this mark. The pattern, since it is basically the same mark as the first pattern, will from a distance be an even tone and the same tone as the first pattern, but on close examination, the alternation of marks is far more interesting because the zigzag pattern creates a sense of motion, rather than a stationary dash of the first pattern.

Now, explore more variations with this simple mark. Instead of rows on top of each other, draw a circle, and inside, around the perimeter, draw the dashes perpendicular to the line of the circle. This will begin to create an arch of sorts on the inside of the circle. Continue making concentric circles of dashes until the circle is full.





For something more complicated, create an asymmetrical shape and fill it with a dash pattern, but this time, use random angles, draw a series of four to six dashes in a row, and then in each subsequent series rotate the angle of the cluster so it is never the same as the previous one. This will create a random order of marks. Make sure you don't overlap the marks, or the pattern will become darker in areas and uneven. Each of these examples—the rows, the zigzag, the circle, and the random angles—will have a very different energy and expression; however, from a distance, they will all create the same even tone.

Try different ways of filling shapes using this idea of varying marks but making an even tone.

All of these examples are variations on a simple mark, which is rather conventional. Here's a game to play to discover new marks: create a single row of the same mark and then start a row of different marks on top of that. If the first row is 45 degrees, make the next row 90 degrees; if the previous rows had straight lines, then make the next row with curves. Try to keep the tone even and have each row contrast with the one below or above it. If any of the patterns leave white areas of negative space, modify the pattern to fill in the open space. This will encourage new ways of thinking about pattern making and encourage exploration and invention when trying to conceive new patterns.



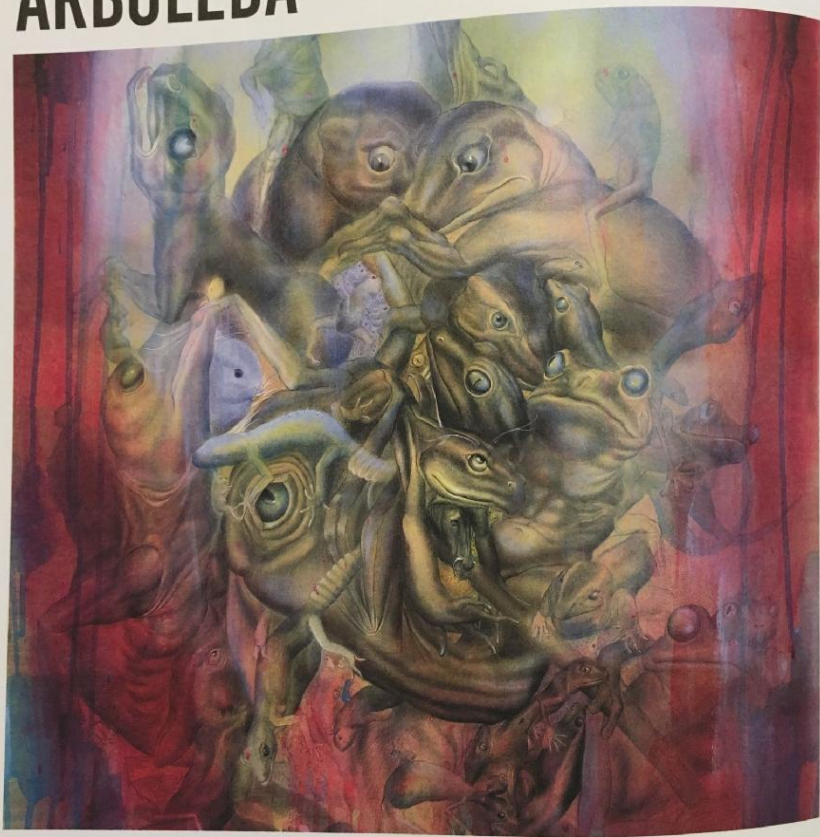
## CHAPTER 5: SKETCHBOOK ART

In the past decade, there has been a surge of interest in sketchbooks and location drawing that revolve around the use of portable mediums. Central to this is the ballpoint pen. Although everyone's approach to sketchbooks is unique, there are considerable similarities among the new wave of sketch enthusiasts. Often, ballpoint is mixed with other media, such as watercolor for toning and white acrylic for highlights (similar to something a classical draftsman would use). Also, there is the tendency to layer images on top of each other, so the drawing can often become very dense. An interplay between the observed and the imagined can also be seen. The tendency is usually toward a less self-conscious, unrestrained approach to drawing. What makes ballpoint unique to this format is its durability and portability. The ink in ballpoint is not water-soluble, so it works well with wet media, and as a result, it layers well, or cohabitates, with other media. It is not messy and does not smudge easily.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# JEAN-PIERRE ARBOLEDA

JEAN-PIERRE IS PRIMARILY AN OIL  
PAINTER. HE WORKS IN BALLPOINT FOR  
DRAWINGS AND SKETCHES. WORKING  
ON PAPER TONED WITH WATERCOLOR,  
HE USES ACRYLIC WASHES FOR DEPTH  
AND HIGHLIGHTS.





Opposite:  
*Stippling II*, 2008  
 Ballpoint pen with  
 acrylic on paper  
 45 x 52 inches  
 (114 x 81 cm)

Below:  
*Charcho 4 partes*, 2008  
 Ballpoint pen with  
 acrylic on paper  
 12 x 16 inches  
 (30.5 x 41 cm)



## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: MIXING MEDIA

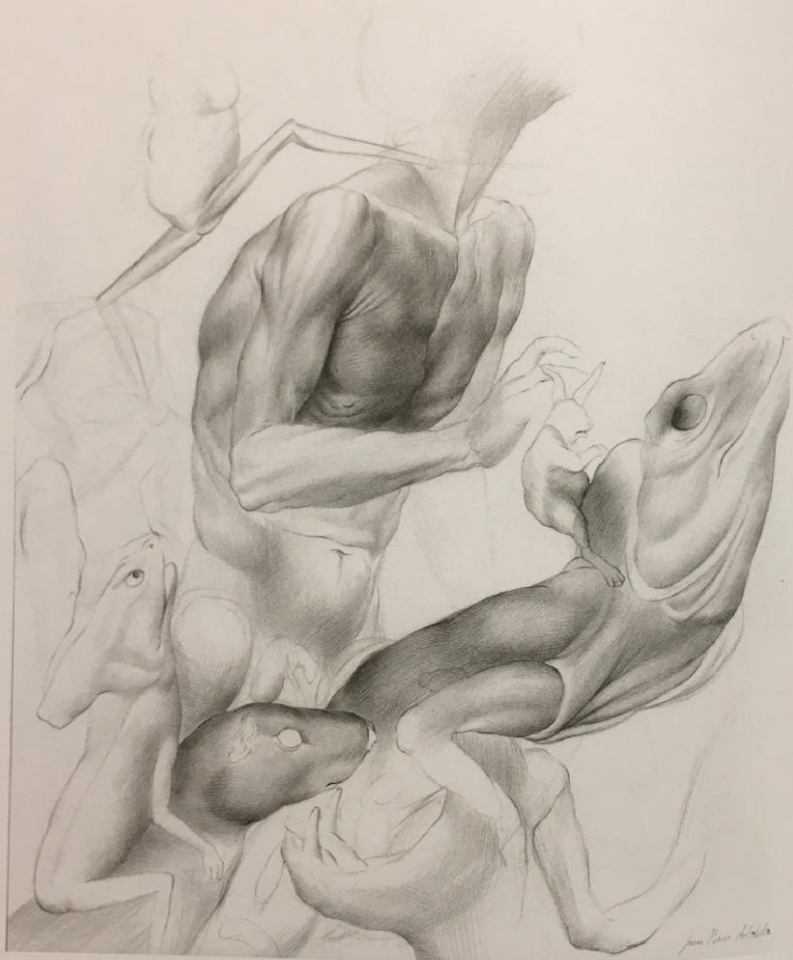
Jean-Pierre uses acrylic washes to wash over ballpoint lines, lightening them and pushing them back in space to differentiate between layered lines and to pull forward and articulate other lines. This method gives his drawings a deeper sense of space. In instances where the highlight is too bright and pops forward in space too much, he'll use a transparent acrylic wash slightly darker than the ground (similar to watercolor) to subtly push it back again.

His drawings come mostly from his imagination. He has studied the anatomies of humans and animals extensively, making him familiar enough with the musculature of both to create imaginary poses and hybrids between the two. Although he still uses photo reference to elaborate on his figures and make them more convincing, he is not beholden to the reference.

Jean-Pierre's compositional process will start with a simple drawing, usually a single figure. If it works, and he likes the drawing, he will leave it as is. These small drawings accumulate over time, and sometimes he'll use them as references, piecing them together into larger ballpoint compositions by redrawing them and layering the elements into an orchestra of figures and animals.

His drawings tend to be done for their own sake (as opposed to sketches for larger works), with the focus being on line, whereas his paintings are tonal. These two ideas about creating form are distinctly separate to him, and only sometimes will a drawing lead to or inspire a painting.

H-y. criaturas, 2019  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
16 x 13 inches  
(41 x 33 cm)



"I use animals in my work to call attention to the struggle of nature. I feel that whether animals are on an endangered list or not, what we're doing to our planet is endangering everyone and everything."

## LINES AND LIGHTING

His interest in drawings, what makes them special and distinct from the tonal nature of his paintings, is the honesty of mark making. Once a mark is made, it has character and an immediacy, a personality captured in the moment the mark was created.

The energy created by his lines is what Jean-Pierre focuses on, what he's interested in when creating a drawing. As he discovers a form, the line dictates how the energy is distributed across the form. Thus, the distance between how the lines are laid out and how they meet and curve around the forms show the distribution of energy across a surface. Lines that start farther apart and then congregate together indicate more pressure and tension, whereas lines that are hatched out in equal distances indicate form but not really energy or motion.

Furthermore, with the simple expression of a line itself (by the lightness/darkness of it), he describes pressure, weight, and volume.

The lighting in Jean-Pierre's drawing is an important aspect in unifying the elements into a cohesive reality, making all of the elements referenced from other drawings fit in the same space. The lighting, like the figures, is purely imaginary. He imagines the figures as having a glowing light from within, a light from above, or a light from behind. Understanding the musculature helps control the light source and determines the angle of it. His crosshatching follows the volume of his figures, so while defining the form, knowing that converging lines indicate tension and a pinching of space and parallel lines

describe an even, or flat space, Jean-Pierre tightens his lines and hatches more densely in areas of shadow. The lines also converge more quickly and tightly across a surface transitioning from spread out to tightly knit to indicate the gradation of light. The shorter the space of the convergence from loose to tight lines, the more dramatic the contrast will be. Jean-Pierre says, "These kind of lightings paired with my subject matter speak to the struggle and transcendence of nature."

## ANIMALS

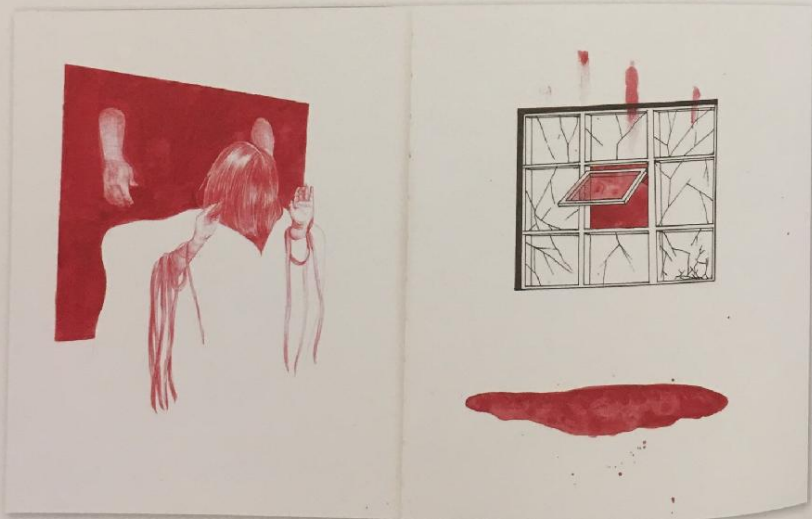
Animals like the frog have a symbolic and nostalgic value. Frogs are mainly associated with water, its cleansing attributes and transformative power. Growing up in Ecuador, Jean-Pierre was surrounded by many kinds of tropical frogs. In recent years, as the petroleum companies have been coming in to extract oil from certain places in the rain forest, scientists have been finding that frogs are usually one of the first animals to be impacted by the changes in the environment because of their very fragile biological makeup.

Jean-Pierre draws his frog mutated with the dual purpose of referencing the frog's transformation from tadpole to adult and to show the frog transformed by unnatural elements to speak to the pollution of the environment. The symbolic quality of the transforming frog speaks to the transcendent and transformative power of nature and animals.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# MELISSA LING

MELISSA LING IS A NARRATIVE ARTIST WORKING MOSTLY IN THE FIELD OF ILLUSTRATION. HER WORK COMBINES AN ASSORTMENT OF MEDIUMS, INCLUDING ACRYLIC, OIL, CHARCOAL, GRAPHITE, AND INK. HER ILLUSTRATIONS APPEAR IN MAGAZINES, AND SHE SELF-PUBLISHES HANDMADE BOOKS OF HER WORK, EXHIBITS HER DRAWINGS IN GALLERIES, AND KEEPS REGULAR SKETCHBOOKS.





Openly  
Untitled 10, 2015  
Ballpoint pen,  
acrylic, and ink  
19 x 15 inches  
(49 x 38 cm)

Below:  
Untitled 6, 2012  
Ballpoint pen and  
watercolor  
17½ x 9¼ inches  
(40 x 23.5 cm)



## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: INTERPRETING THEMES THROUGH THE MEDIUM

The narratives in Melissa's work are inspired by movies, books, memories, and dreams. She will strip an image down to its bare essentials, forcing the viewer to focus in on very specific moments. The moments are divorced from a context and often stripped down to one or two elements, making them mysterious. The drawings feel like moments in time the way snapshots do, but because of their handling, the very fact that they are drawings allows the viewer to be pulled into the moment and invited to contemplate the details. Her assumption is that people tend to overlook things that do not fit their basic perception, and by stripping the drawing down to the bare elements, it's easier to reflect on what is left.

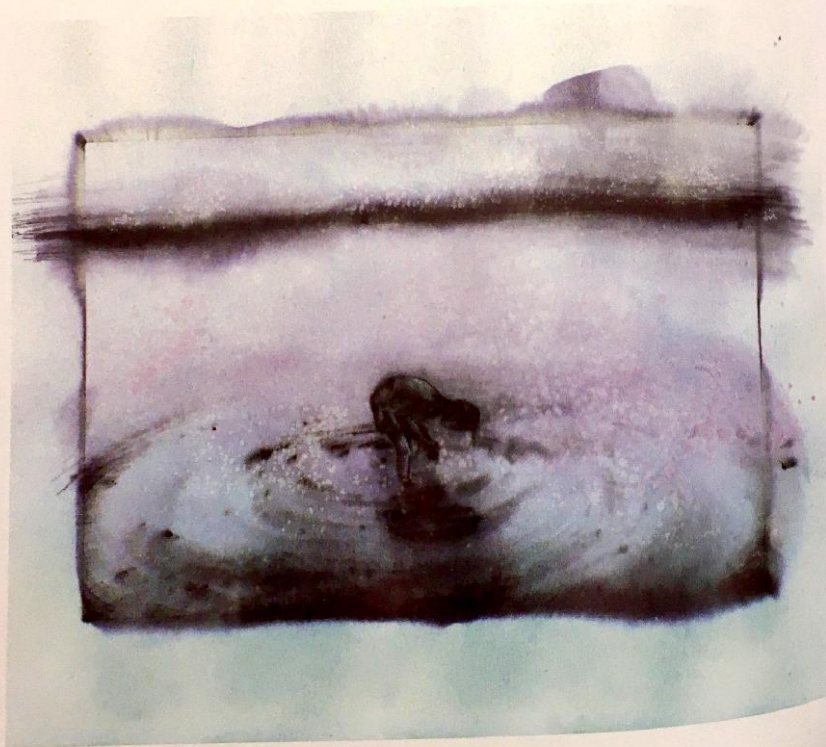
Melissa expresses dream logic in her drawings through inversions and opposites: the air feels heavy and the ground feels light; a close-up of a face has the details blurred. The silence in her work holds a tension, a feeling she is recalling from her childhood. She constantly returns to the repository of her memories out of a need for answers, and this is the source of the mood in her drawings.

The way Melissa uses the pen, distorting it with water, painting over it with acrylic, and interpreting her subjects this way, creates the sense of an unpredictable circumstance. The balance of tightly rendered detail in a drawing with loose washes of watercolor spread on top makes the ballpoint ink run, bleeding into the watercolor; this helps channel the emotional weight of her narratives into the drawing.

Below:  
For KidJ 2, 2011  
Ballpoint pen, acrylic,  
and watercolor  
6 x 8 inches  
(15 x 20.5 cm)

Opposite:  
Untitled 12, 2015  
Ballpoint pen  
and charcoal  
9 1/2 x 15 inches  
(25 x 38 cm)

"My recurring use of water plays into my fascination of opposite feelings. A lot of images that I am drawn to are ones where elements feel dreamlike or what we perceive to be normal feels abnormal. I have always felt that I could only create honest work from what I knew firsthand. In all the work I do, I'm trying to capture a moment of personal clarity, which ironically leads to painting over certain elements and obscuring more rendered areas."



## GETTING STARTED AND MIXING MEDIUMS

A drawing will usually start with an image, from photo reference, that Melissa is interested in and go from there. Besides the basic composition, no preliminary planning is done, and even the composition ends up changing over time. It's important for her to not try to control every aspect of how the end result will look and to just act and react to what comes.

The decision on which mediums to use is based on what feels right at the time. If Melissa is working on a rendered ballpoint drawing and it feels like it's too rigid, she'll paint over certain parts or apply charcoal to make it looser.

She sees ballpoint as a great medium for rendering detailed images, yet it lacks spontaneity. She'll add water to the ink to make it bleed, which can form into shapes that grow, spread directionally, and expand

differently every time. Water also allows colors to mix into the ink like watercolor. When she wets a very detailed drawing, all the bleeds knit together and create a much different image that could not have been made with ballpoint alone.

## SKETCHBOOK PRACTICES

Melissa's use of ballpoint can be found mostly in her sketchbooks, but also to a lesser degree in her illustrations and gallery work. It's the accessibility the pen offers that attracts her to it.

She carries her sketchbook with her, working in it mostly outside the studio, in places like cafés and libraries. Sometimes, she will start a sketchbook page with just marks, no references. She'll bring a small cache of art supplies, usually a few pens and pencils, and appreciates the challenge of being limited to a set of materials and environment. She'll use napkins,

newspapers, coffee cups—whatever is around—to create shapes and textures in her sketchbook.

When in the library, she'll pick out a few books to use for reference that are different every time, and depending on the space and people around her, will combine drawing from life into the composition. If the composition or piece really needs something else that cannot be applied at the moment, she will continue the page in her studio. When starting a new sketchbook, there is no plan or theme; Melissa has no idea how it will evolve and what kind of explorations and processes will occur. Working back and forth between pages, overlapping new moments and thoughts that she's trying to capture, makes the images evolve over time, and it is only on the last page that the interconnectedness of the pages becomes apparent. The literal story for each sketchbook is the documentation of that moment in time in her life.





Along with her sketchbooks, Melissa also self-publishes books of her drawings, although the two are quite different. The published books represent a cleaner, more curated project, something that she feels is more direct in the ideas she is trying to convey. They represent a more realized narrative, whereas the sketchbook evolves over time.

### WORKING FROM REFERENCE

Photography plays a large role in Melissa's drawings. They can provide starting points into a new drawing. She will sometimes work from her own photos, but also from

photos in books and online that she finds intriguing, and she also collects used photos of strangers.

For Melissa, a photograph has this extraordinary power to turn any scene into a significant moment because it doesn't differentiate between what is "real" and what is not. She uses this same approach for her own work by capturing what feels significant and not letting herself be distracted by what something is supposed to be. Sometimes, she'll work from bad-quality printouts because of the way the shapes are broken down; this way, she can disregard whatever the image was and use it as a basis of what it could be.



"My dreams are always in black and white, often containing people with blurred faces and obscure backgrounds, in the same scene looping over and over again. There was a lot of silent tension in my childhood, and I constantly go back to that repository of memories out of my need for answers, which is reflected in the mood of my pieces. When I am working on a piece and struggling to come to terms with the finalization, I realize that I understand a lot more in terms of absence. Because a lot of my process involves exploration, I want the viewer to feel that as well, for them to contemplate rather than read and for them to connect with my work on their terms."

Opposite:  
*Untitled 2*, 2010  
Ballpoint pen  
9 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches  
(23.5 x 30 cm)

Middle:  
*Untitled 4*, 2015  
Ballpoint pen  
11 x 8 1/2 inches  
(28 x 22 cm)

Below:  
*Adam*, 2012  
Ballpoint pen  
40 x 26 inches  
(102 x 66 cm)



FEATURED ARTIST:

# MU PAN

MU PAN IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ELABORATE, LARGE-SCALE ACRYLIC AND WATERCOLOR PAINTINGS THAT FUSE JAPANESE, CHINESE, AND AMERICAN HISTORIES AND POPULAR CULTURES INTO EPIC ALLEGORIES WITH NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN HISTORY AND IMAGINATION. MU'S OLDEST TOOL OF CHOICE, HOWEVER, IS THE BALLPOINT PEN.



104 Braves, 2008  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
14 x 22 inches  
(35.5 x 56 cm)

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: MATERIALS

When Mu was around the age of four, his uncle would staple sheets of blank newsprint paper together and make sketchbooks for him. When Mu would draw with a pencil, he had to sharpen it with a knife when it became dull, and it was dangerous for him to use such a sharp tool at that age; adults would get annoyed having to constantly sharpen pencils for him. Out of convenience, he started using a ballpoint pen and became used to it over time. When he was a child, there was only one size tip and two colors: red and blue.

Today, Mu uses ballpoint pen as the main drawing tool for his sketchbook. He draws with an SKB 0.5 pen from Taiwan (which has a very fine tip) and BIC.

For his sketchbooks, when he was younger he wanted to be cool, so he bought only fancy, hand-bound sketchbooks with a leather cover and high-quality paper. Later on he used sketchbooks his wife made him, and now he uses whatever he can get for free.

## IMAGERY

When starting a drawing, Mu lays down only the rough shapes of his composition from his imagination in pencil. He'll then start the final drawing from the point he is most interested in and go from there. He follows his instinct and lets how he feels about the drawing guide the composition, allowing it to take on a life of its own. The finished drawing rarely resembles what he had originally imagined.

Most of the imagery in Mu's drawings comes from his imagination; that is, he rarely uses photos. Mu is capable of drawing most things from his imagination, but to avoid faking certain things, he will find reference. He won't copy directly from the reference, so as not to be forced to rely on it, but he uses it to get a better idea of what makes the thing unique. In essence, his method is to use the reference, and not be used by it.

He continuously practices life drawing as a way of refining what he knows in his imagination. The practice of drawing from life, specifically the figure, is for him like putting money in the bank: you put your money in the bank whenever you have some extra, and of course it doesn't matter how much money you have saved, it will still never be enough. It's the same with practicing: it will constantly intensify your ability of observation, and you always see the figure differently from time to time. In the end, life drawing gives him the skills to be able to work confidently from his imagination.

## KEEPING A SKETCHBOOK AND A DAILY ROUTINE

Mu works on his paintings Monday through Friday from 9:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon, and again from 8:00 in the evening until 11:00 p.m. On Saturdays, he usually goes to life drawings at a friend's place, and on Sundays, he draws in his sketchbook for his own entertainment.

Mu's paintings and sketchbooks are equal forms of art, though. His sketchbooks are purely personal, sometimes of a more vulgar nature, and his paintings and large-scale drawings are an extension of the ideas in his sketchbooks. His method of execution for both paintings and sketchbooks is the same (to start with a rough pencil sketch of the compositional shapes).

Mu kept a sketchbook as if it were a personal diary from the time he was in high school until his late twenties. For a period of time, he lost passion for his sketchbooks, until his son, Kaede, was born. He began keeping them once again when his son was 100 days old, and the sketchbook features Kaede as the hero and himself as the sidekick, fighting monsters and creating chaos. He calls these drawings Kaede's Sunday Adventures. It is like a fictionalized weekly documentary made only for his own pleasure, a world he gets to create and imagine himself and his son into.

## CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Growing up in Taiwan, Mu was surrounded by traditional Chinese culture. He developed an appreciation for Chinese and Japanese history and also had access to both Japanese and American pop culture. His work is a cross-section of these interests, a combination of his obsessions. His decisions on what to include in his paintings is not so specific, beyond combining the elements of pop culture and history that he enjoys and creating narratives from his obsessions for his own pleasure. "They are the same to me. They are all popular any way."





Concept:  
Jazzy, 2013  
Ballpoint pen and  
tape on paper  
8 x 6 inches  
(23 x 15 cm)

Top:  
Three-headed Tiger, 2010  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
13 x 20 inches  
(33 x 51 cm)

Bottom:  
Lion King, 2015  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
9 x 6 inches  
(23 x 15 cm)



"The Chinese script, included as titles and the names of the characters in my images, are often just for a graphic appeal. They are not that important. I said what I wanted to already with the images. The Chinese writing is just worked as decoration."



The imagery in Mu's drawings—the giant animals, soldiers, cultural references, and Chinese script—is very specific, and to fully understand it, the audience would need to know what the artist knows, to have read the books he has read, watched the movies he has watched, and known the history that he knows. In other words, these may be historic and cultural reference points, but more accurately, this is Mu's imagination, and as such, his concern is not with an audience's need to understand his references, though it's not to exclude the audience, either. He believes that the understanding is irrelevant. Mu's own interest in the subject matter—the

significance it has for him, his enthusiasm for the subject, and his inspiration—is the energy that drives the work, the fuel that inspires it. His desire to entertain himself drives his ability to create an image that becomes greater than an ode to his inspiration or a dedication to his obsessions; his obsessions become his puppets, characters under his control.

He believes the layering of references will create images that allow people to interpret and read into what they like. It also allows for people with the same interests, people who understand the history, or the references, to read deeper and gain more insight into Mu's imagination.

Below:  
Lunch with Tora  
Sam, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on  
paper  
9 x 6 inches  
(23 x 15 cm)

Opposite top:  
Dragon, 2012  
Ballpoint pen and  
tape on paper  
7 1/2 x 10 inches  
(19 x 25.4 cm)

Opposite bottom:  
Sketchbook Portrait,  
Man Sitting, 2009  
Ballpoint pen on  
paper  
4 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches  
(11.4 x 29.2 cm)





EXERCISE:

# CONTOUR DRAWING

THE OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO CREATE AND LAYER CONTOUR DRAWINGS AND TO CREATE AN UNPREDICTABLE AND UNPLANNED COMPOSITION. LET YOURSELF BE LED BY THE LINE RATHER THAN COMPOSE AN IMAGE THAT FITS NICELY ONTO THE PAGE AND TRY NOT TO BE ATTACHED TO MAKING THE DRAWING THE PERFECT, MOST ACCURATE VERSION OF A SUBJECT. JUST FOLLOW THE LINE, AND LET IT DESCRIBE THE FORM NATURALLY AND ORGANICALLY. THIS EXERCISE IS A BIT LIKE WANDERING BLINDLY INTO A MAZE, AND IT HELPS ABANDON THE IDEA OF A "GOOD DRAWING" AND FOCUS ON THE ACT OF SEEING, AND LOOKING, RATHER THAN ON ACCURACY OR BEAUTY.



The basic rules are to use the line to follow the form of the subject. Make one line, with the pen not leaving the paper, until the form is complete. If the line reaches the end of a subject but the form is not complete, without retracing over old lines, find creative ways of connecting the line with the remaining portions of the subject without lifting the pen or creating a new line. This may mean drawing through the figure and creating lines that are not in the subject. There are no right ways of completing a drawing like this, and it may go against the artistic instinct that you will "ruin" a drawing this way, but it forces you to consider new ways of using line. It also creates a deliberate limitation, an obstacle in the creation of a drawing, so it forces you to break out of traditional thinking about drawing, to work with the options at hand. Limitations such as these help enhance an artist's understanding of what is possible with very few choices.





Once the initial form is captured, change position and look at the subject from a new point of view. Begin the second rendering directly on top of the first, following all of the same limitations. This will start to create a scribble effect, where the lines that may have clearly described the previous subject will be lost or abstracted by the layering.




Continue to layer this way through several position changes. The composition will become dense and further abstracted. Some elements, such as the face in this example, will remain clear, while other portions will become obscured. Experiment with different colored pens as well.



Play with scale and depth. Try not to make everything feel like it is at the same distance, so move in closer to the subject and then further away, so different depths are represented.



Once the composition is full, it may be helpful to spend time developing portions of the drawing further, now using more complicated shading. At the end, feel free to break the previous rules and layer a more complete and rendered drawing over the scribbled layers of contours. This will force you to work on top of other lines, and across the contours underneath, again presenting obstacles in composing a more perfect drawing.



EXERCISE:

# CREATING A LIGHT SOURCE

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE VOLUME OF AN OBJECT WORKS HELPS TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO CONTROL THE LIGHT THAT FALLS ON THE OBJECT.



To begin this process, the drawing must be done only in line, with no tone. It may help to do a pencil drawing first. This drawing should be over-rendered to overstate the muscle and bone structure underneath the surface of the skin in the portrait. Understanding the placement of the muscles will help describe the shadows later on and help you understand how shadows fall across them under different light sources.



To understand how lines describe the shadow, cover the surface with even lines as if a shadow were covering the entire face. Use this as a study to guide how shadows will fall under different light sources. In a separate drawing, experiment with inverting a light source.



Begin with a light source from above. Cast shadows under the eyebrows, nose, and lips, following the guides in the previous study. Experiment in this same manner from different angles.



Next, show a light source from the right.



Finally, show the same image with a light source from the left.

EXERCISE:

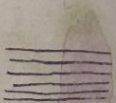
# SHADING WITH WATERCOLOR

TRADITIONAL BALLPOINT PENS SUCH AS THE BIC BRAND USE OIL-BASED INK, A THICK WATERPROOF MEDIUM. THERE ARE ALSO ROLLERBALL PENS, WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO THE BALLPOINT IN THE TIP AND DISPENSATION METHOD, BUT THE INK IS EITHER A GEL OR WATER BASED. IT'S AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION IN THE EVENT OF MIXING INK WITH A WATER-BASED MATERIAL LIKE WATERCOLOR. WATERCOLOR CAN BE USED WITH TRADITIONAL BALLPOINT, AS THE INK CAN BE PAINTED OVER AND WON'T BLEED, BUT IN ROLLERBALL PENS, SUCH AS THE UNI-BALL OR PILOT, THE WATER-SOLUBLE INK WILL RUN.



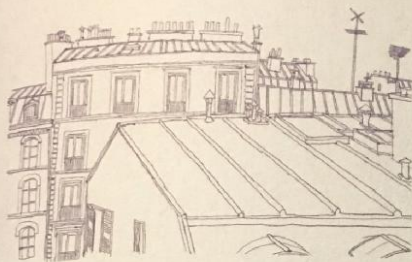
Although ballpoint ink is waterproof, it is good to check it with water first on a scrap sheet of paper. Even though it is oil-based ink, there is still a bit of bleeding that can occur when water is added. It is minor, but if a colored ink is being used, it may interact with the watercolor to create an unexpected tint, and it can also make the lines of the drawing swell mildly, creating a slightly heavier line than anticipated.

The goal of this exercise is to explore how to use watercolor and ballpoint together. Watercolor can act as a good toning and shading medium. When using watercolor to paint over ballpoint, it is important to start the drawing with the intention of adding watercolor later. This means knowing what the watercolor will be used for and to leave room open for it in the drawing. If watercolor will be used to create shadow, then the ballpoint drawing should be only in line. It is redundant to add shadow with two different mediums. If you indicate shadows in an image by, say, crosshatching, then it is perhaps repetitive to add tone in the same area with watercolor.



Test the washes first on a piece of scrap paper. The first wash to apply is the darkest to establish a constraint in the image and the range from darkest to lightest.





Create a drawing completely out of line, describing only shapes and contour, no shadow. To keep things clear and simple, the watercolor should be divided into three values: a dark value, a mid-tone, and a light, almost transparent shade. More than this runs the risk of making the image murky. The subject may have a wider range of tones, but this is an easy way of simplifying the information from the start.



To understand a clearer sense of the values in the subject of the drawing—to simplify the information as much as possible—it helps to squint at the subject so that all of the detail disappears, and all that is left are the more general pieces of information. This makes it easier to identify which forms will be described by the three tones (white is the fourth tone, in fact, so always leave the white of the paper for the whitest white).



To identify the next two tones in the subject, think of the lighter of the two, the next lightest value other than white. Consider all of the lightest parts of the image that are not white, and paint these with the lighter of the two remaining values. The remaining value will be the mid-tone.



Once the image is broken down into these three values (four with white) this can be the end of the image, or it can be the ground upon which more refined detail is built.

EXERCISE:

# LAYERING BALLPOINT AND ACRYLIC



To test how this works, create a square filled in with ballpoint so it is dark. Look at a photo or draw from life and focus only on the highlights of the subject. Allow the dark of the ink to be the shadows and pull out the highlights with acrylic. Start with a wash to describe the forms and add the opaque for the true whites. This will give an idea of how the two materials relate to each other.

For a larger example, create a ballpoint drawing that is fully composed but not resolved. The drawing is one that will be refined, so draw it quickly and use a lot of energy; this is not a precious drawing, but a loose sketch that will be built up over time. There should be no pencil drawing, so draw straight to paper with pen and do not labor over mistakes.

ACRYLIC IS A GOOD MEDIUM TO USE FOR ADJUSTING BALLPOINT PEN. BECAUSE BALLPOINT HAS NO ERASER, CLEANING UP MISTAKES ARE OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO USE ACRYLIC ON BALLPOINT: OPAQUELY AND TRANSPARENTLY. OPAQUE IS GOOD FOR FIXING MISTAKES, BRINGING OUT THE WHITE OF THE PAGE, AND ADDING SHARP HIGHLIGHTS. TRANSPARENT IS FOR ADDING DEPTH, PUSHING LINES BACK IN SPACE, AND GENERALLY CREATING MORE DEPTH.



The next step is to refine the areas where mistakes were made or where detail is to be focused. The end product will be a drawing that goes from tight to loose, with areas of spontaneity next to refined drawing. Hands and faces are perfect areas to focus on and refine. Cover up the areas that are incorrect or disproportional with acrylic. Ballpoint draws very nicely over acrylic, so the texture of the marks will be more or less the same as they appear on paper.

Once the acrylic dries, continue to rework in pen over the painted areas and build up the rest of the drawing along with these painted areas. Lightly washing a transparent layer over the ballpoint will soften it as well, and lend precise areas a more delicate feel giving the illusion of a more tonal drawing, almost like a painting. Building lines on top of that will create a deeper tonal range.

As the details of the lights are added by working back and forth over the painted areas, continue to develop the looser areas of the drawing with no paint. Focusing on only one area will give a false impression of how finished it is. If an area is not developed in relation to the rest of the values, having a very finished head does no good if the body is not resolved. If the detailed areas are finished first and then the rest of the drawing follows, once the whole is complete, the focused areas' relationship to the rest of the image will look awkward. The "finished" head will not fit properly and will need to be worked on more, and it then risks being overworked.









Dominique Vastallberg  
Grace House, 2011  
Ballpoint pen drawing on paper  
47 x 80 x 1/4 inches  
(119 x 203 x 1.5 cm)

## CHAPTER 6 : CONTEMPORARY REALISM

Contemporary realism involves artists exploring a variety of ways of observing and representing the real world through drawing by utilizing, or even inventing new ways of, looking. This is a distinct difference from that of classical techniques, which rely on a well-established tradition of "looking" and "rendering." The significance here is searching for new ways of "looking." The process of looking is ingrained in the concept of the work rather than a set of rules to determine a specific path that emphasizes only the subject. These artists are concerned with how the subject is observed.

FEATURED ARTIST:

# DOMINIQUE VANGILBERGEN

DOMINIQUE VANGILBERGEN VIEWS HIMSELF AS A STORYTELLER WHO DOES NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY, LIKE AN ILLUSIONIST IN A THEATER USING SMOKE AND MIRRORS. HE CHOOSES NOT TO GUIDE PEOPLE THROUGH THE NARRATIVE, BUT RATHER FACILITATES AN EXPERIENCE THAT ALLOWS VIEWERS TO READ INTO THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE WORK. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO SUGGEST AND EVOKE A MOOD, TO STAGE AND IMPLY A NARRATIVE, WITHOUT TELLING ONE.



Opposite:  
*The Screenists (II)*, 2013  
Ballpoint pen  
16 x 12 inches  
(41 x 33 cm)

Above:  
*Opera #9*, 2013  
Ballpoint, spray  
paint, and charcoal  
on hand made paper  
15 x 22 inches  
(38 x 56 cm)



The subjects and settings in Dominique's drawings mostly deal with the characters, the people inhabiting these images, and their relationship to nature. Nature is usually in some controlled or curated format, such as a greenhouse, a theater, or a deserted settlement on a mountain. The people in these scenarios, people who are often left in negative space to imply the presence as well the absence of others, suggest the presence of an audience for the drawing. The subjects being viewed in the drawing are a parallel to the drawing itself. They echo the audience's experience created by Dominique.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: ORGANIZING VALUE

Dominique's drawings are primarily ballpoint pen, but traces of watercolor, spray paint, and charcoal can also be found.

His drawings typically consist of grand spaces, large-scale environments inhabited by a figure or figures, usually simplified graphically or left in negative white space, that contrast with the environment's meticulous detail. The size of the figure, usually small in comparison to the landscape, establishes scale, reinforcing the expanse of the environment that dominates the figure. The space is also enhanced by the attention paid to the organization of value. Dominique breaks his spaces up into a clear foreground, middle ground, and background, a deep space that allows for a cinematic "mise-en-scène."

*Opera* is a good example of how this works. The environment is divided spatially with values; the woman closest to the viewer is darkest and highest in contrast, which pulls her closer to the viewer spatially. The audience in the middle ground has a wash over them, so there are no strong highlights



and no darks as dark as the woman; the tonal range here is purely in the middle. In the background, the stage is all white and the details are drawn in lightly, all in the highest range of value. The darkest dark in the background gets no darker than the darks in the middle ground, whereas the highlights are all white. This very narrow range of the light values pushes the

information far back into space. This is a good way of taking a lot of visual information and condensing it into simple, bold choices. The woman is drawn with the highest density of the darkest darks and the lightest lights, the highest contrast, so she becomes the focal point, and within the spatial illusion of the drawing, she is the closest in space to the viewer.





By deciding in advance that each level of depth will have a specific range of value, Dominique keeps all of the details in a specific space, and that space is not confused with any other space. The darkest dark in the back will never be as dark as the darkest dark in the foreground, and this idea keeps the values and details separate and distinct within each of their specific spatial depths.

Opposite:  
*Paradise Lost # 2*, 2011  
Ballpoint pen, charcoal,  
spray paint, and water color  
41 x 69 x 19 inches  
(104 x 175 x 1.5 cm)

Below:  
*Paradise Lost*, 2011  
Ballpoint pen on  
Arches paper  
47 x 75 inches  
(120 x 190.5 cm)



## WORKING WITH DETAIL AND MAINTAINING CLARITY

Dominique works in layers of drawing within his images (layering the drawing in step by step from light to dark, moving from the lightest details in the beginning to the darkest at the end) as a way of controlling the clarity and detail, but it's a process that takes a lot of time. It's a slow and intensive method that can at times be more like putting marks on paper than making an image.

Contrast is an important way that Dominique structures his drawing, another way of aiding the clarity. Examples of how he uses contrast are putting a hard object next to a soft one, or sparse or negative space next to detailed objects. This contrast works both as a technical device and adds to the concept. Sometimes this will inevitably lead to areas of the drawing getting overworked; then the light is gone and it's lost for good. When that happens, Dominique leaves it, because it is part of the process: paper is finite and what is drawn is exactly what is seen, so he must commit to the mistakes like overworking an area as well.

Building the drawing up in stages lets Dominique organize the value range and create depth, allowing him to employ a greater amount of detail while maintaining a high degree of clarity. By deciding in advance that each level of depth will have a specific range of value, Dominique keeps all of the details in a specific space, and that space is not confused with any other space. The darkest dark in the back will



never be as dark as the darkest dark in the foreground, and this idea keeps the values and details separate and distinct within each of their specific spatial depths. Another term for this is establishing a hierarchy with the values.

## ENLARGING DRAWINGS BY HAND

Collages of different images, which are not very big, form the basis of Dominique's drawings, and this is how he starts his process. Over the collage, he puts a series of intersecting lines. The same lines are used on the larger paper the drawing will be done on. This allows for Dominique to have a matching set of guides: one smaller over the collage and a corresponding larger one on the drawing paper for lining up the content of the collage, essentially scaling the drawing up, but in a manual way, without the use of computers or mechanical reproduction. This works the way a pantograph scales up an image, but all by hand.

## MARK MAKING

The marks Dominique makes with his pen are not only used as shading; looking closely, most shapes are assigned or identified with a particular type of mark. The textures of various surfaces are broken down and assigned graphic marks and patterns for shading. The shading helps create a sense of illusionism, but the marks and patterns abstract the illusion and provide a sense of importance to each mark and shadow. For example, in *Paradise Lost*, very delicate marks describe the rocks and mountains, and very gestural marks are used for the dark sky. These marks make every object feel unique and distinct.

His use of marks is intended to be somewhat cold and emotionless, like a rubber stamp, purely functional in how it contributes to the overall image. Dominique thinks of it as a game of marking the paper. It can sometimes feel more like writing more than drawing, where his marks become the vocabulary he is writing with. All of this is not so much a conscious strategy or plan as a means of making the drawing work; overplanning would destroy the spontaneity. Dominique's drawing process is more of a reaction or a way to process information as he draws it.

The audience's participation brings the narrative full circle; it is how the audience interprets the scenario that completes the story. To Dominique, the world looks like a theater, where the audience tries to give meaning to the actions in front of them. "I sometimes like to 'fog' the issue," he says. "People often invent their own explanations for my pieces, create a theater around them. It's flattering, but sometimes it is literally just a few marks made with a ballpoint pen; everything is open to interpretation."

## FIGURES IN RELATIONSHIP TO SPACE

In Dominique's work, the relationship between the characters and the setting is inspired by the figure/ground relationships in the etchings of Jacques Callot, a Baroque master printmaker of the sixteenth century. Callot puts the figure in full scale in front of the landscape, and it dominates the image. He provides a lot of information about the character, which was his job in those days. Dominique works in the negative sense, ridding the figure of all information. This is again a way of emphasizing the solidity and loneliness of the figure. Each figure has a materiality and a substance, indeed a witness of the narrative, even if the figure is recessed or inlaid into the image. Who that witness is, is a secondary issue.



Shadow, 2013  
Ballpoint, watercolor,  
and charcoal on paper  
11 x 8 inches  
(28 x 20.5 cm)

"I create new fiction; I make images that don't already exist and I include narrative elements, but I don't provide the denouement. But these have an underlying theme; some of them are about global warming, for those who care. But the bigger picture is that they talk about life and men."





FEATURED ARTIST:

# DAWN CLEMENTS

LIKE MOST PEOPLE, DAWN CLEMENTS USES A BALLPOINT PEN FOR ALL KINDS OF WRITING: WRITING NOTES, MAKING SHOPPING LISTS, OR DOODLING WHILE ON THE TELEPHONE. SHE ALWAYS HAS A BALLPOINT PEN WITH HER, WHICH IS HOW SHE STARTED USING IT FOR HER DRAWING. IT'S A NATURAL WRITING, NOTATING, AND DRAWING TOOL, AS WELL AS A THINKING TOOL. EVEN WHEN THERE'S NO TEXT IN A BALLPOINT PEN WORK, THE VERY MARK OF BALLPOINT PEN WORK, ENCOURAGES "READING," NOT JUST "VIEWING."







There are many things about the ballpoint pen mark: the speed, the ease, the color, and the ordinariness. Using the same tool for making art that is used for making shopping lists or writing letters interests Dawn. The marks of a black ballpoint pen are not exactly black, but metallic with a silvery sheen. To fill a shape in ballpoint requires a lot of marks. While the ballpoint pen is an efficient and economical writing tool, making a drawing with a ballpoint pen can be time-consuming; it forces the artist to slow down and be meticulous. This slow speed contributes to a slow reading/viewing. In contrast, when working with a brush, Dawn's gesture is different and faster, and it encourages a different reading of an image. It's the slow "read" of a ballpoint pen drawing that is attractive to her.

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: FILM AS INSPIRATION AND REFERENCE

Dawn's work varies between large- and small-scale drawings. Her large-scale works have the tendency to sprawl across several sheets of paper. She adds paper to the drawing to facilitate the growing composition, rather than the drawing extending to meet the edges of the paper. The subjects in her drawings range from interiors to still lives and sometimes are drawn from films, where the movie is paused and she works directly from the screen. In these drawings, she will sometimes string together a camera pan into a single drawing, but usually will find many shots of the same space from a particular film. The shots can be taken from various points in the movie, and she will composite them together to create a larger, more complete view of the room. Working from different angles like this can create a distorted perspective of the room.

Dawn uses ballpoint as well as a variety of other mediums. She'll often work in Sumi ink and brush and sometimes color (watercolor, gouache, or ink) and pencil. She uses Sumi ink and brush as well as ballpoint in the work made from observations of her immediate physical environment.

## WORKING FROM FILM

Dawn's film drawings have sources and inspiration from melodramatic films that are sometimes referred to as "women's pictures." She is moved and excited by the exuberant and excessive display of emotion in melodrama. Though the visual references of her film drawings come from melodrama, she is influenced by a wider range of film directors beyond melodramatic directors. Douglas Sirk, Max Ophüls, Anthony Mann, Vincente Minnelli, Raffaello Matarazzo, Luchino Visconti, Roberto Rossellini, Jacques Demy, Claire Denis, Chantal Akerman, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Agnès Varda all figure prominently in her inspiration and between them cover film genres from melodrama to neo-realism and others.

Dawn chooses the characters for whom she has some empathy. Although she understands the characters are fictional, like most avid film viewers, she becomes deeply involved in the fiction and is (willingly) as vulnerable as anybody who is moved by the narrative. Capable of full emotional involvement in a movie, she sometimes feels taken captive by it, like when dreaming. Story, character, performance, cinematography, and design are all at work.

**Opposite:**  
Shocking Room (Titanic,  
1953), detail, 2006  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
42 x 76 inches  
(107 x 193 cm)

**Above:**  
Jessica Drummonds  
(My Reputation, 1946), 2012  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
87 1/2 x 240 inches  
(222 x 610 cm)



Above:  
*Jessica Drummonds*  
*(My Reputation, 1946)*  
 Detail, 2012  
 Ballpoint pen on paper  
 87½ x 240 inches  
 (222 x 610 cm)

Opposite:  
*Smoking Room*  
*(Tropic, 1952)*, 2006  
 Ballpoint pen on paper  
 42 x 78 inches  
 (107 x 198 cm)

For her film work, Dawn depicts an interior (usually domestic) space that has the potential to express human conditions and that shows a sense of movement. This may not be presented in a single shot. Sometimes, the different parts of the room are revealed over the course of the film. This is usually determined by the character's movement, but not always. Dawn will study the film and log the time codes of all the shots that are interesting to her. She'll then "piece" the space(s) back together through drawing. Attempting to bring fragments together to make a seamless "whole" is akin to the construction of a traditional film narrative. In traditional films, the narrative usually doesn't occur in the time or space that the film represents. In a very fragmented manner, a traditional film works to create a representation of a seamless whole: a whole story, a whole period of time, a whole place, whole characters. This is achieved by highly abstract means.

Additionally, the figure is as much a combination of shapes as the surrounding space. For Dawn, all the shapes are equal and she tries not to emphasize any one more than another. The figures in her work are implicit, whether present or absent; the space implies the human presence, and so their absence from a drawing implies their presence as much as in the drawings where figures are visible. Her interest equally lies in the figure's surroundings that are always seen, but often unacknowledged.

In some of Dawn's earlier works, she would combine film shots from different movies to create a new spatial image of her own invention. These works had a sort of collage sensibility, but drawn, not cut and pasted. One of these drawings, *Giallo*, from 2002, was worked from a number of Italian thriller and horror films from the 1960s and 70s. She drew, piecemeal, a variety of hallway and stairway shots in an attempt to imply an endless passageway from which there was no visible escape.

## STARTING A COMPOSITION

When starting a new drawing, Dawn usually has some kind of plan for the composition, but even when she thinks she knows what will happen in a work, something else might occur, and she remains open to the unexpected. She'll usually start with a generally rectangular piece of paper cut from a roll of paper. If the drawing needs to expand, she adds more paper. Unexpected problems may occur, and aren't always welcome, but sometimes the most frustrating problems end up drawing her in. They change the work, taking it in a new direction, something she embraces. Her process is very organic and something like crawling. Her eyes and hand move slowly across objects and the paper. Through this process, the image gradually expands.

When drawing from life, Dawn usually starts by drawing something before her. It could be anything. From that first mark, the drawing grows. She has a tendency to finish as she goes, resolving the thing in front of her and moving on, so in a way, the drawing is always finished and never finished. At some

point, she'll decide it's complete. Sometimes it has to do with having done what she set out to do (such as a bouquet of flowers, a tabletop, or a room) and other times the point of completion is determined by a time limit (such as a two-month residency).

## REPRESENTING TIME AND SPACE

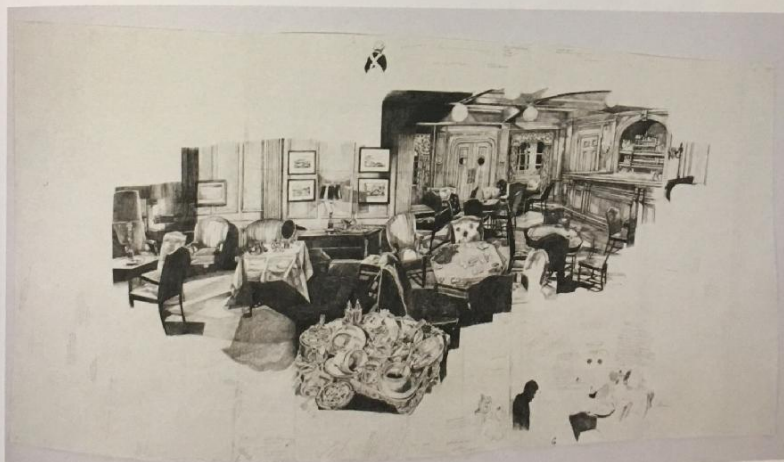
Time and space are significant to her work. They affect her speed, her materials, and the physical objects she draws. Flowers bloom and die, fruit and vegetables wither and rot. Over the course of the work, she'll incorporate these changes. Sometimes she moves the objects themselves.

Because film is a time-based medium, her work from it slows the viewing experience, allowing the viewer to pass through the drawing or experience it over time; it is a stationary image, but one that cannot be taken in all at once. It must be moved through, thought about, and contemplated, the way a film is experienced over time and not all at once. The work

unfolds, and the time that she puts into the drawing, the time that the pen demands from her in drawing, is also demanded of the viewer once the work is done.

The film drawings, being a collection of moments from throughout the film, all depicting a single space, help create an impression of the space from multiple viewpoints, not just a fixed view. This gives the sense that the space is not captured from a frozen moment or a single perspective in time. Despite being a stationary drawing, the image captures the sense of passing time felt in the movie.

The combination of these numerous views may continue to convey stillness, but not frozenness. Dawn draws comparisons with the idea of multiple viewpoints and the work of Edward Hopper. Hopper composed his paintings from many, many drawings of places and figures. The drawings were made from life, or as Hopper described, "from the fact," whereas the paintings were often made from the drawings in the confines of the art studio. Dawn sees these as Hopper's "fictions" composed from "factual"





information. In Hopper's paintings, there are some subtle shifts in perspective. For Dawn, these shifts allow the paintings to breathe. To her, Hopper's paintings do not depict frozen moments, but stillness. There is a feeling of duration. Maybe the duration is only a few seconds, maybe it's longer, or maybe it's shorter, but it's a space in time, viewing time, waiting time, and thinking time.

She finds similar parallels in David Hockney's photo collages (especially *Pearlblossom Hwy, April 11–18, 1986*). These are examples of how frozen instants (photo snapshots) can be combined to create a more expansive "still" space and a feeling of a more expansive time.

## DRAWING FROM REFERENCE VERSUS DRAWING FROM LIFE

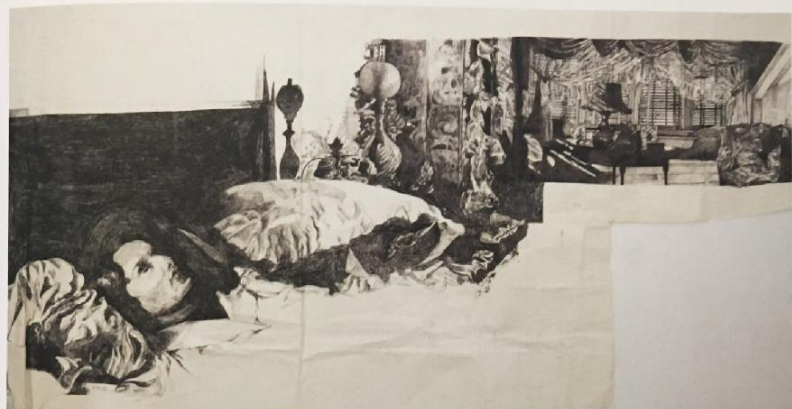
There is a huge difference between drawing from film (a photographic representation of life) and from direct physical observation.

When drawing from a photograph (or from a video monitor or projected film), the object Dawn is drawing is the film image, not a three-dimensional person, object, or place. A film or a photograph is a flat object with an image on it. When drawing from a snapshot, she does not invent or add to the image, but only draws what the photograph provides. So, if in a photograph a black shape represents a shadow under a table, that's what it is: a black shape, an abstract thing, not an illusion. In life, a very dark shadow obscuring the underside of a table can be looked at more closely; a light can be turned on to see what is in the shape of the shadow.

When drawing from films, Dawn draws what is seen on the screen and no more. However, sometimes she subtracts elements. For instance, in the drawing *Mrs. Jessica Drummond's ('My Reputation,' 1945)*, above the woman's head was an active, patterned wallpaper, which was excluded from the drawing. In the case of that particular work, her interest was in drawing the path of the character's actions in the scene. (Anna the housemaid enters the bedroom; Mrs. Drummond gets out of bed and walks to the bathroom sink.)

Viewers may perceive a lot of gaps in these images. This is because the camera doesn't always show the entire room. For instance, if a camera shot's purpose is to frame a woman (character), the chair next to her may be cropped. Over the course of the film, the rest of the chair may not be revealed.





Opposite:  
*Untitled (Table)*, 2008  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
54 x 84 inches  
(137 x 213 cm)

Top:  
*Gerry's* (Leon Morin,  
Priest, 1961), 2011  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
57 x 36 inches  
(145 x 91.5 cm)

Bottom:  
*Jessica Drummonds*  
*(My Reputation, 1946),*  
detail, 2012  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
87½ x 240 inches  
(222 x 610 cm)

FEATURED ARTIST:

# JOO LEE KANG

JOO LEE KANG'S HIGHLY DETAILED RENDERINGS OF MUTATED NATURALISTIC SUBJECTS REFERENCE CLASSICAL MOTIFS FROM VICTORIAN NATURALIST AND DECORATIVE STYLES AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DUTCH STILL LIFES. SHE REINTERPRETS THE WAY ARTISTS HAVE HISTORICALLY OBSERVED NATURAL PHENOMENA AND PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE AS A FORM OF DOCUMENTATION, TRANSFORMING THEM INTO HIGHLY ALLEGORICAL IMAGES CONCERNED WITH THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH, AND MANIPULATION OF, THE NATURAL WORLD.



Opposite:  
Still Life with  
Insects Series, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
14 x 15 inches  
(36.5 x 38 cm)

Below:  
Still Life with  
Shells #7, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
29 1/2 x 40 1/2 inches  
(75 x 103 cm)



At a distance, her labor-intensive, cross-hatched plants and animals and her elaborate wallpaper patterns (inspired by late nineteenth-century British decorative arts) relate to both a sense of nostalgia and a desire to document a taxonomy of insects, flowers, fish, farm animals, seashells, and more. Closer inspection reveals nature in flux, a grotesque hybrid of evolution and manipulation. Crossbred animals and genetically modified mutants are disguised by her elegant, delicate treatment of these subjects.

## ART TRADITIONS

Joo Lee expresses a strong interest in art history, which was a large part of her education in school. Both the naturalists and the decorative artists represent a sort of non-fine art, or an art that serves a purpose beyond its own existence (the naturalist to educate, and the decorative artist for interior decoration). This is an important reference point for understanding Joo Lee's work. The decorative quality, especially with her use of wallpaper, initially disguises her interest in the human relationship with science and nature. From a distance, the works look like benign decorative pieces. On closer inspection, the natural world is in a state of metamorphosis imposed by the hand of modern science.

Although Joo Lee's inspiration largely comes from classical subjects, the images themselves are drawn from references of plants and animals taken from science and nature magazines, websites, and books. The creatures she produces from these references are purely from her imagination. The staging of the composition relies on her love of classical still lifes.







Pattern of Life 5, 2013  
ink-jet printed ballpoint  
pen-drawn wallpaper

## EXPLORING TECHNIQUE: BUILDING UP THE DRAWING

Joo Lee uses the pen to build up layers to form rich blacks in her drawings. Her technique relies on crosshatching, a layering of line to create depth. She's capable of creating a wide tonal range of grays, more so than with traditional ink, and this lends itself well to the textures such as animal fur that are found in her work. The non-erasable component of ballpoint forces her to focus on each line. She starts lightly, slowly building up the darks, and where she sees herself making mistakes, she will focus on these areas, developing them more and further fleshing out the details as a way of working through the mistake. Joo Lee feels she can become obsessed with the parts that don't seem to be working. The more she focuses on it, the more detail it will reveal. She will often be working on several drawings at once, so she can hang them up side by side in her studio, walk away from one, and work on another. Distancing herself from a piece helps her see it more clearly and avoid overworking problem areas.

Joo Lee's work starts with her imagining the drawing on the paper; she draws invisible lines with her pen and eyes before actually starting it. Then she begins drawing in light lines to figure out the composition, where objects will go, and how big they will be. Sometimes these first lines are in ballpoint, and sometimes they are in pencil if the drawing is very large. She also finds the areas where the shadows will eventually be. Once she has her composition figured



out, and has an understanding of where the darker shadows will fall, she begins to crosshatch.

Her hatching technique is to layer short lines to create a three-dimensional effect. She focuses first on the larger shape of an object by creating a large mass with hatching—nondescript and lacking detail—just to capture the overall tone and volume of the thing. Then she works into it more to create the detail (the phrase used for this technique is “the general before the specific”).

The sort of line or mark that she uses in each object is determined by its surface texture; for instance, for an object like a tortoise shell, which is solid and hard, she uses very strong, consistent lines. The pressure she uses on the pen is firm and consistent throughout the mark. The fur of an animal may be described with sharp lines, where the pressure of the pen starts firm and then fades out as the pen is lifted toward the end of the mark. Each shape is assigned a mark to describe its surface texture. The mark is used consistently throughout the object, layering it more and more in the shadows to help describe its three-dimensional volume.

Joo Lee uses white, hot press drawing paper. Hot press has a smooth surface and facilitates a sharper, cleaner drawing style, as opposed to the more textural cold press, which can impose itself on the drawing, making it look rougher. Once the drawing is done, she fixes it with several layers of UV-protected fixative to prevent fading. (Ballpoint has a tendency to fade over time when exposed to light.)

Top:  
Still Life with  
Tortoise Shells,  
detail, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
14 x 15 inches  
(35.5 x 38 cm)

Bottom:  
Still Life with  
Shells 2,  
detail, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
30 3/4 x 25 inches  
(78 x 63.5 cm)



## BALLPOINT REFLECTIONS

Joo Lee's adoption of ballpoint pen developed from her interest in it as a convenient tool for sketching. It has an accessibility that lent itself well to her lifestyle at the time. She was an international student and was traveling a lot, so she could take the pen and work anywhere, as it is highly portable and maintenance-free. She would use it to draw in her sketchbook, later translating those drawings into paintings with gouache, watercolor, and graphite. She began to ask herself, "Why use ballpoint as just a sketch tool, why not as a more serious art tool?" As she began to use it to create more finished works, she fell in love with the properties she was discovering: non-erasable, good for building up layers and beautiful tones. The fine line articulates precise detail, an important aspect of her work that relates back to the naturalists' use of drawing as a means of scientifically cataloging the physical characteristics of natural forms.

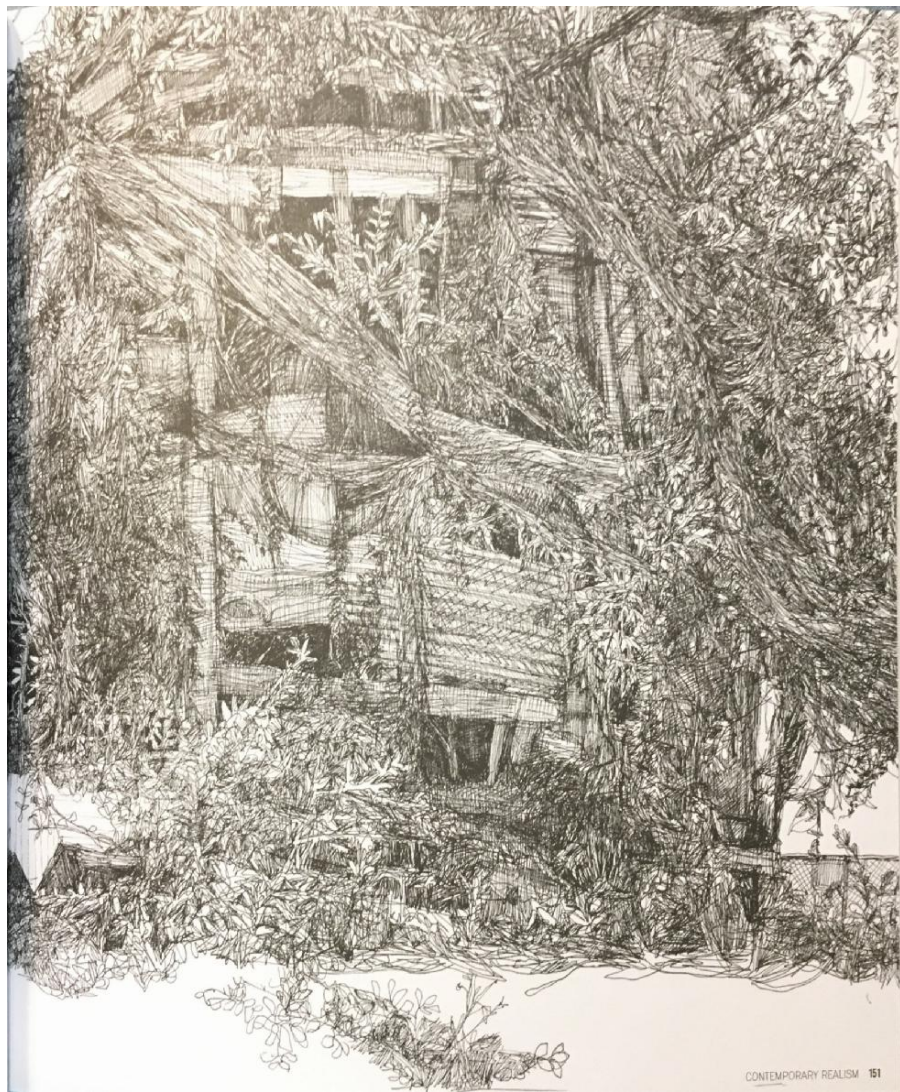



Still Life with  
Shell 2, 2014  
Ballpoint pen on paper  
36 1/2 x 25 inches  
(93 x 63.5 cm)



Image Highlight:  
Hannah Chalmers  
*Train House*, 2011  
Pen and ink on paper  
19 x 26 inches  
(48.5 x 66 cm)







EXERCISE:

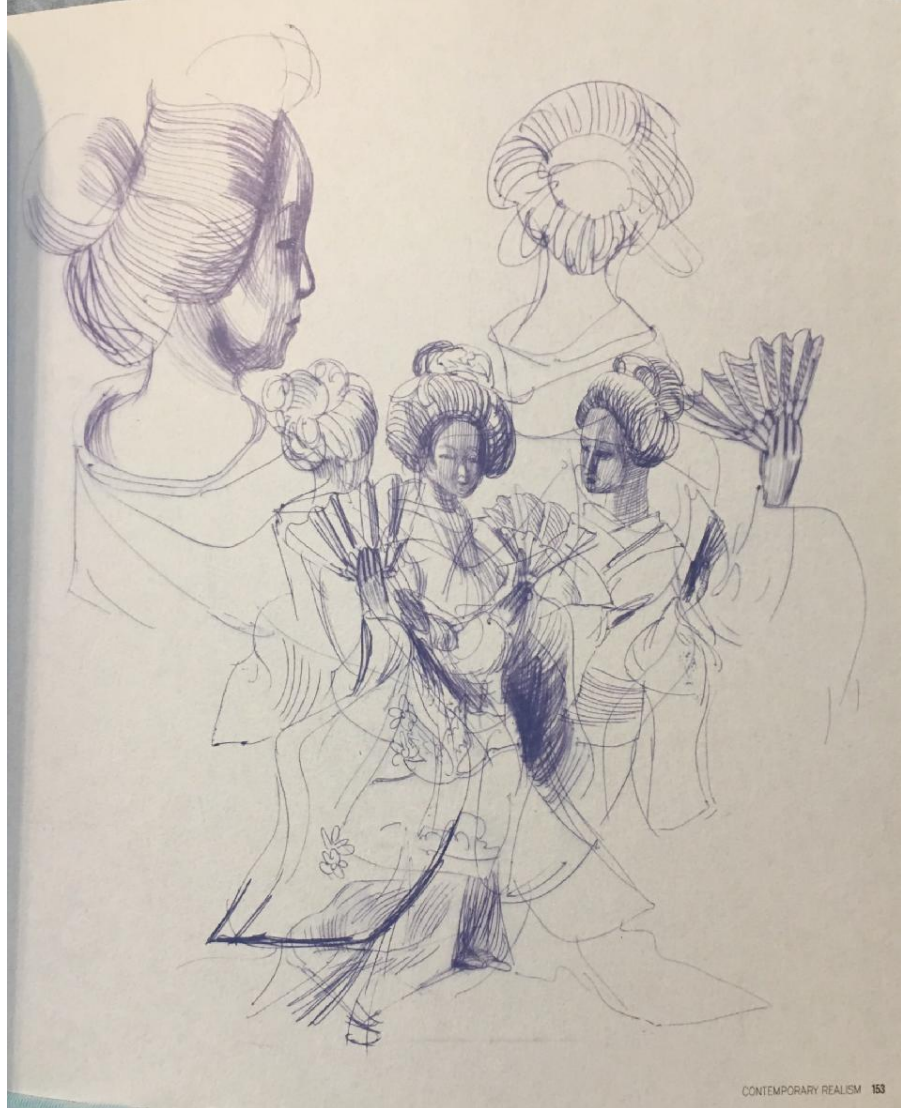
# MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS OF ONE OBJECT

THE OUTCOME OF THIS EXERCISE WILL BE TO HAVE CREATED A SENSE OF TIME AND MOTION FROM A STATIONARY OBJECT.

The object itself is to remain still on a table, but you will change positions at various stages of the drawing to view the object from various angles, layering each new position on top of the next. This also will keep the drawing loose, as the drawing has to be layered. Each position cannot be overdrawn so as to leave room for the following position and subsequent layers. The drawings should overlap, but not be directly on top of each other. Every new layer will start on top of the previous and will have to deal with integrating the various positions, possibly destroying and covering up elements of the previous layer. This layering process

forces you to consider the drawing, but not become attached to a single composition or pose. The process dictates the composition, so no planning can go into the composition prior to starting. In this way, you will discover an unforeseeable, unpredictable composition. This exercise separates you from any preconceived notion of a "finished" drawing or a planned composition. Rather, the composition is wholly an outcropping of, and response to, the process. The result will be a fluid and organic composition based on reacting to and building upon the previous layers.







EXERCISE:

# 360-DEGREE VIEW OF A ROOM

THE OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO CONTINUE TO ADD TO A COMPOSITION. YOU'LL START AT THE LEFT EDGE OF THE PAGE AND WORK RIGHT, CONTINUING TO ADD PAPER TO THE COMPOSITION AS THE DRAWING EXPANDS FURTHER TO THE RIGHT.

The drawing should be done in a room, and the objective is to turn in a 360-degree rotation to capture the entire space. Do not plan the drawing first and start with pen directly on the paper, without a pencil sketch.

Each page should be completed before adding on to the drawing; reworking is discouraged here. Focus only on moving across the page; think of the paper as a scroll and the drawing like writing, as if you were writing across the page and describing what you see.

The point is to not to be able to plan ahead, but to treat the drawing as a pure documentation, to draw only what is seen from that particular angle. This organic process, rather than planning, determines the composition.

Attach each page directly to the end of the last one, lined up as a continuation of the previous drawing.







EXERCISE:

# ONE MARK

USING ONE TYPE OF MARK FOR AN ENTIRE DRAWING FORCES THE ARTIST TO DEAL WITH LIMITATIONS. THIS ONE MARK (WHICH MOVES IN ONE DIRECTION, IN THIS CASE VERTICAL) MUST BE USED TO DEMONSTRATE TONAL VARIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS AND VARIOUS OBJECTS WITHIN THE IMAGE. IN THIS EXERCISE, THE IMAGE IS RECREATED WITH A VERTICAL DASH. THE MARK WILL STAY ROUGHLY A CONSISTENT SIZE (OTHERWISE, IT WOULD BE JUST LIKE CROSSHATCHING). WITH THIS MARK, RENDER AN ENTIRE IMAGE TONALLY.

Experiment with the mark to discover how best to create tonal variations (in this case, by clustering them tightly together for darks and using heavier marks and spacing them out for lighter tones).

It is okay to do a pencil sketch first to have an understanding of scale and proportion within the composition.

The result of this drawing will be somewhat lacking in tight detail and will be very impressionistic. There should be no outlines used with the pen (only in the preliminary pencil sketch); tonal areas intersecting will create the forms. For example, a light shape next to a dark shape will create the sense of a line. In this drawing, form is described with light and shadow, not outlines.

To understand how dark a form is, look at the space around it and determine whether the surface it is sitting on is darker or lighter than the form itself.

Start by identifying the darkest shapes and begin describing them. The shape of those forms will begin to define the negative shapes and the lighter forms.

This exercise will help create a sense of tonal relationships within a piece, as well as emphasize the "whole" image apart from its details. This process forces the artist to look and draw what is seen, rather than what is "known." A good strategy is to push the darks to be darker than they look and allow the whites to be lighter than they look.





EXERCISE:

# DRAWING TEXTURE

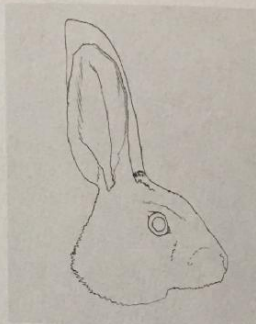
DRAWING TEXTURE ON AN OBJECT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS ASSIGNING A MARK THAT CAN INDICATE THE SURFACE QUALITY. THE MARK CAN BE USED TO DESCRIBE THE VOLUME AND SHAPE OF THE OBJECT. TEXTURE HELPS DIFFERENTIATE OBJECTS, SO FOR CLARITY IN A DRAWING, BEING PARTICULAR IN ASSIGNING A MARK TO DESCRIBE AN OBJECT WILL MAKE THE OBJECT FEEL UNIQUE. USING THE SAME MARK THROUGHOUT A DRAWING, OVER MANY OBJECTS, CAN GIVE THE WORK UNIFORMITY, LIKE EVERYTHING IS MADE OUT OF THE SAME MATERIAL.



Drawing the fur of a rabbit starts off with finding the best sort of mark for the fur. Looking at the hair, a mark can be made to imitate the short curved dash. Imagine that all of the shadows on the fur are actually hundreds of little hair shadows that combine into one large shadow. When you draw the dash you are not drawing the hair so much as its shadow.

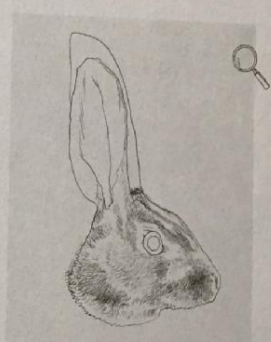
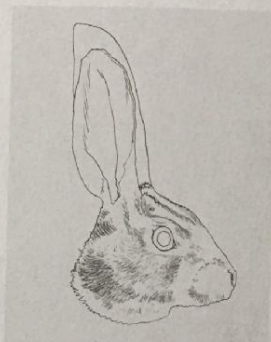
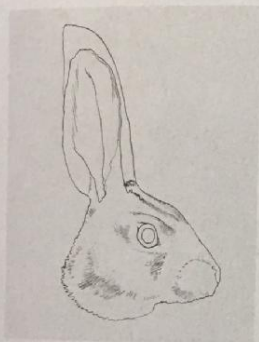


Experiment with the mark a bit before starting the drawing to find different ways of using it for shading and texture. The direction of the mark can describe how the surface curves, and layering them densely creates a darker cloud that can be used to create shadows. The evenness of the stroke describes smooth fur; drawing it in little tufts makes the hair look ruffled. These are examples of how the texture will be used to create fur for the rabbit.



Begin by drawing the structural defining features, such as the jaw, the eyebrow, the forehead, and the nose. Treat the fur like it's wrapping around the surface of the face, and draw the texture to reflect the direction the surface is moving in in order to correctly define its angle. The shadows will make more sense once the form is defined.





Once the form is drawn, continue to spread the fur over the face, rendering the shadows. Layer the marks closer together to make the shadows darker. Avoid adding any marks for hair in the lightest area, even if you see it when examining the subject.

It may help to squint while looking at the rabbit so that the detail will disappear and the texture won't be visible. Look at the shapes, the dark portions that cover the surface, and describe the fur in those areas.

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SEP 14 2016

# THE ART OF BALLPOINT

*The Art of Ballpoint* offers a historical perspective of the pen as an art medium and how it has evolved and grown in popularity. The book features several leading contemporary ballpoint artists who are creating complex and provocative masterpieces. They discuss their methods, the messages in their work, and their personal connections to the pen.

These fascinating pieces range from psychologically charged portraits to mutant animals to spectacular wall-sized abstractions. The chapters cover classical drawing, modern abstraction, graphic illustration, contemporary realism, and sketchbook styles.

Interspersed throughout the book, ballpoint techniques are demonstrated through stepped-out exercises that explore line drawing and crosshatching, shading and tone, photo-realism, drawing texture and pattern, working in layers, mixing other media with ballpoint, and more. Glide through this inspiring book and enjoy the intricate and impressive works created from an everyday tool.



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